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INVOCATION : WAR POEMS AND OTHERS  
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## ARDOURS AND ENDURANCES



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1915

ARDOURS AND  
ENDURANCES

ALSO A FAUN'S HOLIDAY &  
POEMS AND PHANTASIES BY

ROBERT NICHOLS

LONDON  
CHATTO & WINDUS

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R. M. B. N.

1917.



## INTRODUCTION

### 1. *Of the nature of the poet:*

“We are (often) so impressed by the power of poetry that we think of it as something made by a wonderful and unusual person: we do not realize the fact that all the wonder and marvel is in our own brains, that the poet is ourselves. He speaks our language better than we do merely because he is more skilful with it than we are; his skill is part of our skill, his power of our power; generations of English-speaking men and women have made us sensible to these things, and our sensibility comes from the same source that the poet’s power of stimulating it comes from. Given a little more sensitiveness to external stimuli, a little more power of associating ideas, a co-ordination of the functions of expression somewhat more apt, a sense of rhythm somewhat keener than the average—given these things we should be poets, too, even as he is. . . . *He is one of us.*”

## 2. *Of what English poetry consists:*

“English poetry is not a rhythm of sound, but a rhythm of ideas, and the flow of attention-stresses (*i.e.*, varying qualities of words and cadence) which determines its beauty is inseparably connected with the thought; for each of them is a judgment of identity, or a judgment of relation, or an expression of relation, and not a thing of mere empty sound. . . . He who would think of it as a pleasing arrangement of vocal sounds has missed all chance of ever understanding its meaning. There awaits him only the barren generalities of a foreign prosody, tedious, pedantic, fruitless. And he will flounder ceaselessly amid the scattered timbers of its iambuses, spondees, dactyls, tribrachs, never reaching the firm ground of truth.”

“AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF  
ENGLISH POETRY,”\* by MARK LIDDELL.

\* *Published by Grant Richards (1902). This remarkable book, establishing English poetry as a thing governed from within by its own necessities, and not by rules of æsthetics imposed on it from without, formulates principles which, unperceived, have governed English poetry from the earliest times, which find their greatest exemplar in Shakespeare, and which, though beginning to be realized by the less pedantic of the moderns, are in its pages for the first time lucidly expounded and—such is their adequacy—can, in the end, only be regarded as indubitably proven.—R. M. B. N., 1917.*

BOOK I  
ARDOURS AND  
ENDURANCES

TO THE MEMORY OF MY TRUSTY AND  
GALLANT FRIENDS: HAROLD STUART  
GOUGH (*King's Royal Rifle Corps*) AND  
RICHARD PINSENT (*the Worcester  
Regiment*)

For what is life if measured by the space,  
Not by the act ?"

BEN JONSON.

## THE SUMMONS

I.—TO—

ASLEEP within the dearest hour of night  
And, turning with the earth, I was aware  
How suddenly the eastern curve was bright,  
As when the sun arises from his lair.  
But not the sun arose: it was thy hair  
Shaken up heaven in tossing leagues of light.

Since then I know that neither night nor day  
May I escape thee, O my heavenly hell !  
Awake, in dreams, thou springest to waylay  
And should I dare to die, I know full well  
Whose voice would mock me in the mourning  
    bell,  
Whose face would greet me in hell's fiery way.

## II.—THE PAST

How to escape the bondage of the past ?  
I fly thee, yet my spirit finds no calms  
Save when she deems her rocked within those  
    arms  
To which, from which she ne'er was caught. or  
    cast.

O sadness of a heart so spent in vain,  
That drank its age's fuel in an hour:  
For whom the whole world burning had not  
    power  
To quick with life the smouldered wick again !

### III.—THE RECKONING

THE whole world burns, and with it burns my  
flesh.

Arise, thou spirit spent by sterile tears;  
Thine eyes were ardent once, thy looks were  
fresh,

Thy brow shone bright amid thy shining peers.  
Fame calls thee not, thou who hast vainly strayed  
So far for her; nor Passion, who in the past  
Gave thee her ghost to wed and to be paid;  
Nor Love, whose anguish only learned to last.

Honour it is that calls: canst thou forget  
Once thou wert strong? Listen; the solemn call  
Sounds but this once again. Put by regret  
For summons missed, or thou hast missed them  
all.

Body is ready, Fortune pleased; O let  
Not the poor Past cost the proud Future's fall.



FAREWELL TO PLACE  
OF COMFORT

## FAREWELL TO PLACE OF COMFORT

FOR the last time, maybe, upon the knoll  
I stand. The eve is golden, languid, sad. . . .  
Day like a tragic actor plays his rôle  
To the last whispered word, and falls gold-clad.  
I, too, take leave of all I ever had.

They shall not say I went with heavy heart:  
Heavy I am, but soon I shall be free;  
I love them all, but O I now depart  
A little sadly, strangely, fearfully,  
As one who goes to try a Mystery.

The bell is sounding down in Dedham Vale:  
Be still, O bell ! too often standing here  
When all the air was tremulous, fine, and pale,  
Thy golden note so calm, so still, so clear,  
Out of my stony heart has struck a tear.

And now tears are not mine. I have release  
From all the former and the later pain;  
Like the mid-sea I rock in boundless peace,  
Soothed by the charity of the deep sea rain. . . .  
Calm rain ! Calm sea ! Calm found, long sought  
in vain.

O bronzen pines, evening of gold and blue,  
Steep mellow slope, brimmed twilit pools below,  
Hushed trees, still vale dissolving in the dew,  
Farewell! Farewell! There is no more to do.  
We have been happy. Happy now I go.



## THE APPROACH

I.—IN THE GRASS: HALT BY ROADSIDE

IN my tired, helpless body  
I feel my sunk heart ache;  
But suddenly, loudly  
The far, the great guns shake.

Is it sudden terror  
Burdens my heart ? My hand  
Flies to my head. I listen . . .  
And do not understand.

Is death so near, then ?  
From this blaze of light  
Do I plunge suddenly  
Into Vortex ? Night ?

Guns again ! the quiet  
Shakes at the vengeful voice. . . .  
It is terrible pleasure.  
I do not fear ; I rejoice.

## II.—THE DAY'S MARCH

THE battery grides and jingles,  
Mile succeeds to mile;  
Shaking the noonday sunshine,  
The guns lunge out awhile,  
And then are still awhile.

We amble along the highway;  
The reeking, powdery dust  
Ascends and cakes our faces  
With a striped, sweaty crust.

Under the still sky's violet  
The heat throbs on the air. . . .  
The white road's dusty radiance  
Assumes a dark glare.

With a head hot and heavy,  
And eyes that cannot rest,  
And a black heart burning  
In a stifled breast,

I sit in the saddle,  
I feel the road unroll,  
And keep my senses straightened  
Toward to-morrow's goal.

There, over unknown meadows  
Which we must reach at last,  
Day and night thunders  
A black and chilly blast.

Heads forget heaviness,  
Hearts forget spleen,  
For by that mighty winnowing  
Being is blown clean.

Light in the eyes again,  
Strength in the hand,  
A spirit dares, dies, forgives,  
And can understand !

And, best ! Love comes back again  
After grief and shame,  
And along the wind of death  
Throws a clean flame.

\* \* \* \*

The battery grides and jingles,  
Mile succeeds to mile;  
Suddenly battering the silence  
The guns burst out awhile.

. . . .  
I lift my head and smile.



### III.—NEARER

NEARER and ever nearer. . . .  
My body, tired but tense,  
Hovers 'twixt vague pleasure  
And tremulous confidence.

Arms to have and to use them  
And a soul to be made  
Worthy if not worthy;  
If afraid, unafraid.

To endure for a little,  
To endure and have done:  
Men I love about me,  
Over me the sun !

And should at last suddenly  
Fly the speeding death,  
The four great quarters of heaven  
Receive this little breath.



BATTLE

## I.—NOON

It is midday: the deep trench glares. . . .  
A buzz and blaze of flies. . . .  
The hot wind puffs the giddy airs. . . .  
The great sun rakes the skies.

No sound in all the stagnant trench  
Where forty standing men  
Endure the sweat and grit and stench,  
Like cattle in a pen.

Sometimes a sniper's bullet whirs  
Or twangs the whining wire;  
Sometimes a soldier sighs and stirs  
As in hell's frying fire.

From out a high cool cloud descends  
An aeroplane's far moan. . . .  
The sun strikes down, the thin cloud  
    rends . . .  
The black speck travels on.

And sweating, dizzied, isolate  
In the hot trench beneath,  
We bide the next shrewd move of fate  
Be it of life or death.

## II.—NIGHT BOMBARDMENT

SOFTLY in the silence the evening rain  
descends. . . .

The soft wind lifts the rain-mist, flurries it, and  
spends

Its grief in mournful sighs, drifting from field  
to field,

Soaking the draggled sprays which the low hedges  
wield

As they labour in the wet and the load of the  
wind.

The last light is dimming; night comes on  
behind.

I hear no sound but the wind and the rain,  
And trample of horses, loud and lost again  
Where the waggons in the mist rumble dimly on  
Bringing more shell.

The last gleam is gone.

It is not day or night; only the mists unroll  
And blind with their sorrow the sight of my soul. .

I hear the wind weeping in the hollow overhead:  
She goes searching for the forgotten dead  
Hidden in the hedges or trodden into muck  
Under the trenches, or maybe limply stuck  
Somewhere in the branches of a high lonely  
tree—

He was a sniper once. They never found his  
body.

I see the mist drifting. I hear the wind and rain,  
And on my clammy face the oozed breath of the  
slain

Seems to be blowing. Almost I have heard  
In the shuddering drift the lost dead's last word:

Go home, go home, go to my house;  
Knock at the door, knock hard, arouse  
My wife and the children—that you must do—  
What do you say?—Tell the children, too—  
Knock at the door, knock hard, arouse  
The living. Say: the dead won't come back to this  
house.

O . . . but it's cold—I soak in the rain—  
Shrapnel found me—I shan't come home again—  
No, not home again!

The mourning voices trail  
Away into rain, into darkness . . . the pale  
Soughing of the night drifts on in between.

*The Voices were as if the dead had never been.*

O melancholy heavens, O melancholy fields,  
The glad, full darkness grows complete and shields  
Me from your appeal.

With a terrible delight  
I hear far guns low like oxen at the night.  
Flames disrupt the sky.

The work is begun.  
"Action!" My guns crash, flame, rock and stun  
Again and again. Soon the souging night  
Is loud with their clamour and leaps with their  
light.

The imperative chorus rises sonorous and fell:  
My heart glows lighted as by fires of hell.  
Sharply I pass the terse orders down.  
The guns blare and rock. The hissing rain is  
blown  
Athwart the hurtled shell that shrilling, shril-  
ling goes  
Away into the dark, to burst a cloud of rose  
Over German trenches.

A pause: I stand and see  
Lifting into the night like founts incessantly  
The pistol-lights' pale spores upon the glim-  
mering air . . .  
Under them furrowed trenches empty, pallid,  
bare . . .  
And rain snowing trenchward ghostly and white.

O dead in the hedges, sleep ye well to-night!

### III.—COMRADES: AN EPISODE

BEFORE, before he was aware  
The ' Verey ' light had risen . . . on the air  
It hung glistening. . . .

And he could not stay his hand  
From moving to the barbed wire's broken strand.  
A rifle cracked.

He fell.

Night waned. He was alone. A heavy shell  
Whispered itself passing high, high overhead.  
His wound was wet to his hand: for still it bled  
On to the glimmering ground.  
Then with a slow, vain smile his wound he  
bound,  
Knowing, of course, he'd not see home again—  
Home whose thought he put away.

His men  
Whispered: " Where's Mister Gates ?" " Out  
on the wire."  
" I'll get him," said one. . . .

Dawn blinked, and the fire



Of the Germans heaved up and down the line.  
“Stand to!”

Too late! “I’ll get him.” “O the swine!  
When we might get him in yet safe and whole!”  
“Corporal didn’t see ’un fall out on patrol,  
Or he’d ’a got ’un.” “Sssh!”

“No talking there.”

A whisper: “’A went down at the last flare.”  
Meanwhile the Maxims toc-toc-tocked; their  
swish

Of bullets told death lurked against the wish.  
No hope for him!

His corporal, as one shamed,  
Vainly and helplessly his ill-luck blamed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then Gates slowly saw the morn  
Break in a rosy peace through the lone thorn  
By which he lay, and felt the dawn-wind pass  
Whispering through the pallid, stalky grass  
Of No-Man’s Land. . . .

And the tears came  
Scaldingly sweet, more lovely than a flame.  
He closed his eyes: he thought of home  
And grit his teeth. He knew no help could  
come. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

The silent sun over the earth held sway,  
Occasional rifles cracked and far away

A heedless speck, a 'plane, slid on alone,  
Like a fly traversing a cliff of stone.

"I must get back," said Gates aloud, and  
heaved  
At his body. But it lay bereaved  
Of any power. He could not wait till night . . .  
And he lay still. Blood swam across his sight.  
Then with a groan:  
"No luck ever! Well, I must die alone."

Occasional rifles cracked. A cloud that shone,  
Gold-rimmed, blackened the sun and then was  
gone. . . .

The sun still smiled. The grass sang in its play.  
Someone whistled: "Over the hills and far  
away."

Gates watched silently the swift, swift sun  
Burning his life before it was begun. . . .

Suddenly he heard Corporal Timmins' voice:

"Now then,  
'Urry up with that tea."

"Hi Ginger!" "Bill!" His men!  
Timmins and Jones and Wilkinson (the 'bard'),  
And Hughes and Simpson. It was hard  
Not to see them: Wilkinson, stubby, grim,  
With his "No, sir," "Yes, sir," and the slim

Simpson: "Indeed, sir?" (while it seemed he  
winked  
Because his smiling left eye always blinked)  
And Corporal Timmins, straight and blonde  
and wise,  
With his quiet-scanning, level, hazel eyes;  
And all the others . . . tunics that didn't fit . . .  
A dozen different sorts of eyes. O it  
Was hard to lie there! Yet he must. But no:  
"I've got to die. I'll get to them. I'll go."

Inch by inch he fought, breathless and mute,  
Dragging his carcass like a famished brute. . . .  
His head was hammering, and his eyes were dim;  
A bloody sweat seemed to ooze out of him  
And freeze along his spine. . . . Then he'd lie  
still

Before another effort of his will  
Took him one nearer yard.

\* \* \* \* \*

The parapet was reached.  
He could not rise to it. A lookout screeched:  
"Mr. Gates!"

Three figures in one breath  
Leaped up. Two figures fell in toppling death;  
And Gates was lifted in. "Who's hit?" said he.  
"Timmins and Jones." "Why did they that  
for me?—

I'm gone already!" Gently they laid him prone  
And silently watched.

He twitched. They heard him moan  
"Why for me?" His eyes roamed round, and  
none replied.

"I see it was alone I should have died."  
They shook their heads. Then, "Is the doctor  
here?"

"He's coming, sir; he's hurryin', no fear."

"No good. . . .

Lift me." They lifted him.  
He smiled and held his arms out to the dim,  
And in a moment passed beyond their ken,  
Hearing him whisper, "O my men, my men!"

IN HOSPITAL, LONDON,  
*Autumn, 1915.*

#### IV.—BEHIND THE LINES: NIGHT, FRANCE

At the cross-roads I halt  
And stand stock-still. . . .  
The linked and flickering constellations climb  
Slowly the spread black heaven's immensity.

The wind wanders like a thought at fault.

Within the close-shuttered cottage nigh  
I hear—while its fearful, ag'd master sleeps like  
    the dead—  
A slow clock chime  
With solemn thrill  
The most sombre hour of time,  
And see stand in the cottage's garden chill  
The two white crosses, one at each grave's  
    head. . . .

O France, France, France! I loved you, love  
    you still;  
But, Oh! why took you not my life instead?

## V.—AT THE WARS

Now that I am ta'en away,  
And may not see another day,  
What is it to my eye appears ?  
What sound rings in my stricken ears ?  
Not even the voice of any friend  
Or eyes beloved-world-without-end,  
But scenes and sounds of the countryside  
In far England across the tide:  
An upland field when Spring's begun,  
Mellow beneath the evening sun. . . .  
A circle of loose and lichen'd wall  
Over which seven red pines fall. . . .  
An orchard of wizen blossoming trees  
Wherein the nesting chaffinches  
Begin again the self-same song  
All the late April day-time long. . . .  
Paths that lead a shelving course  
Between the chalk scarp and the gorse  
By English downs; and, O ! too well  
I hear the hidden, clanking bell

Of wandering sheep . . . I see the brown  
Twilight of the huge empty down. . . .  
Soon blotted out ! for now a lane  
Glitters with warmth of May-time rain,  
And on a shooting briar I see  
A yellow bird who sings to me.

O yellow-hammer, once I heard  
Thy yaffle when no other bird  
Could to my sunk heart comfort bring;  
But now I would not have thee sing,  
So sharp thy note is with the pain  
Of England I may not see again !  
Yet sing thy song: there answereth  
Deep in me a voice which saith:  
“ *The gorse upon the twilit down,  
The English loam so sunset brown,  
The bowed pines and the sheep-bells’ clamour,  
The wet, lit lane and the yellow-hammer,  
The orchard and the chaffinch song,  
Only to the Brave belong.  
And he shall lose their joy for aye  
If their price he cannot pay,  
Who shall find them dearer far  
Enriched by blood after long War.*”

VI.—OUT OF TRENCHES: THE BARN, TWILIGHT

IN the raftered barn we lie,  
Sprawl, scrawl postcards, laugh and speak—  
Just mere men a trifle weary,  
Worn in heart, a trifle weak:  
Because alway  
At close of day  
Thought steals to England far away. . . .  
“ Alf ! ” “ O ay.”  
“ Gi’ us a tune, mate.” “ Well, wot say ? ”  
“ Swipe ‘ The Policeman’s ’Oliday ’ . . . ”  
“ *Tiddle-iddle-um-tum,*  
*Tum-TUM.* ”

Sprawling on my aching back,  
Think I nought; but I am glad—  
Dear, rare lads of pick and pack !  
Aie me too ! I’m sad . . . I’m sad :  
Some must die  
(Maybe I):  
O pray it take them suddenly !



“ Bill !” “ Wot ho !”  
“ Concertina: let it go—  
‘ If you were the only girl.’ ” “ Cheero !”  
“ *If you were the Only Girl.*”

Damn. ‘ Abide with Me . . . ’ Not now !—  
Well . . . if you must: just your way.  
It racks me till the tears nigh flow.  
The tune see-saws. I turn, I pray  
Behind my hand,  
Shaken, unmanned,  
In groans that God may understand:  
Miracle !  
“ Let, let them all survive this hell.”  
Hear ‘ Trumpeter, what are you sound-  
ing ? ’ swell.  
(My God ! I guess indeed too well:  
The broken heart, eyes front, proud knell !)  
Grant but mine sound with their farewell.  
“ *It’s the Last Post I’m sounding.*”

VII.—BATTERY MOVING UP TO A NEW POSITION  
FROM REST CAMP: DAWN

Not a sign of life we rouse  
In any square close-shuttered house  
That flanks the road we amble down  
Toward far trenches through the town.

The dark, snow-slushy, empty street. . . .  
Tingle of frost in brow and feet. . . .  
Horse-breath goes dimly up like smoke.  
No sound but the smacking stroke

Of a sergeant flings each arm  
Out and across to keep him warm,  
And the sudden splashing crack  
Of ice-pools broken by our track.

More dark houses, yet no sign  
Of life. . . . An axle's creak and whine. . . .  
The splash of hooves, the strain of trace. . . .  
Clatter: we cross the market place.

Deep quiet again, and on we lurch  
Under the shadow of a church:  
Its tower ascends, fog-wreathed and grim;  
Within its aisles a light burns dim. . . .

When, marvellous ! from overhead,  
Like abrupt speech of one deemed dead,  
Speech-moved by some Superior Will,  
A bell tolls thrice and then is still.

And suddenly I know that now  
The priest within, with shining brow,  
Lifts high the small round of the Host.  
The server's tingling bell is lost

In clash of the greater overhead.  
Peace like a wave descends, is spread,  
While watch the peasants' reverent eyes. . . .

The bell's boom trembles, hangs, and dies.

O people who bow down to see  
The Miracle of Calvary,  
The bitter and the glorious,  
Bow down, bow down and pray for us.

Once more our anguished way we take  
Toward our Golgotha, to make  
For all our lovers sacrifice.

Again the troubled bell tolls thrice.

And slowly, slowly, lifted up  
Dazzles the overflowing cup.

O worshipping, fond multitude,  
Remember us too, and our blood.

Turn hearts to us as we go by,  
Salute those about to die,  
Plead for them, the deep bell toll:  
Their sacrifice must soon be whole.

Entreat you for such hearts as break  
With the premonitory ache  
Of bodies, whose feet, hands, and side,  
Must soon be torn, pierced, crucified.

Sue for them and all of us  
Who the world over suffer thus,  
Who have scarce time for prayer indeed,  
Who only march and die and bleed.

\* \* \* \* \*

The town is left, the road leads on,  
Bluey glaring in the sun,  
Toward where in the sunrise gate  
Death, honour, and fierce battle wait.

VIII.—EVE OF ASSAULT: INFANTRY GOING  
DOWN TO TRENCHES

DOWNWARD slopes the wild red sun.  
We lie around a waiting gun;  
Soon we shall load and fire and load.  
But, hark! a sound beats down the road.

“’Ello! wot’s up?” “Let’s ’ave a look!”  
“Come on, Ginger, drop that book!”  
“Wot an ’ell of bloody noise!”  
“It’s the Yorks and Lancs, meboys!”

So we crowd: hear, watch them come—  
One man drubbing on a drum,  
A crazy, high mouth-organ blowing,  
Tin cans rattling, cat-calls, crowing. . . .

And above their rhythmic feet  
A whirl of shrilling loud and sweet,  
Round mouths whistling in unison;  
Shouts: “’O’s goin’ to out the ’Un?”

“ Back us up, mates !” “ Gawd, we will !”

“ ’Eave them shells at Kaiser Bill !”

“ Art from Lancashire, melad ?”

“ Gi’ ’en a cheer, boys; make ’en glad.”

“ ’Ip ’urrah !” “ Give Fritz the chuck.”

“ Good ol’ bloody Yorks !” “ Good-luck !”

“ Cheer !”

I cannot cheer or speak  
Lest my voice, my heart must break.

## IX.—THE ASSAULT

NOTE.—(1) "Zero" is the hour agreed upon by the Staff when the infantry are to go over the parapet and advance to the assault. (2) Guns are said to "lift" when, after pounding the front line of the enemy, they lengthen their range and set up a barrier of fire behind his front line to prevent supports moving up. Our infantry then advance.

THE beating of the guns grows louder.

*"Not long, boys, now."*

My heart burns whiter, fearfuller, prouder.

Hurricanes grow

As guns redouble their fire.

Through the shaken periscope peeping,

I glimpse their wire:

Black earth, fountains of earth rise, leaping,

Spouting like shocks of meeting waves.

Death's fountains are playing.

Shells like shrieking birds rush over;

Crash and din rises higher.

A stream of lead raves

Over us from the left . . . (we safe under cover !)

Crash ! Reverberation ! Crash !

Acrid smoke billowing. Flash upon flash.

Black smoke drifting. The German line  
Vanishes in confusion, smoke. Cries, and cry  
Of our men, "*Gah, yer swine !*  
*Ye're for it,*" die  
In a hurricane of shell.

One cry:  
"*We're comin' soon ! look out !*"  
There is opened hell  
Over there; fragments fly,  
Rifles and bits of men whirled at the sky:  
Dust, smoke, thunder ! A sudden bout  
Of machine guns chattering . . .  
And redoubled battering,  
As if in fury at their daring ! . . .

No good staring.

Time soon now . . . home . . . house on a sunny  
hill . . .  
Gone like a flickered page:  
Time soon now . . . zero . . . will engage. . . .

A sudden thrill—  
"Fix bayonets !"  
Gods ! we have our fill  
Of fear, hysteria, exultation, rage,  
Rage to kill.



My heart burns hot, whiter and whiter,  
Contracts tighter and tighter,  
Until I stifle with the will  
Long forged, now used  
(Though utterly strained)—  
O pounding heart,  
Baffled, confused,  
Heart panged, head singing, dizzily pained—  
To do my part.

Blindness a moment. Sick.  
There the men are !  
Bayonets ready: click !  
Time goes quick;  
A stumbled prayer . . . somehow a blazing star  
In a blue night . . . where ?  
Again prayer.  
The tongue trips. Start:  
How's time ? Soon now. Two minutes or less.  
The gun's fury mounting higher . . .  
Their utmost. I lift a silent hand. Unseen  
I bless  
Those hearts will follow me.  
And beautifully,  
Now beautifully my will grips.  
Soul calm and round and filmed and white !

A shout: " Men, no such order as retire "

I nod.

The whistle's 'twixt my lips . . .

I catch

A wan, worn smile at me.

Dear men !

The pale wrist-watch . . .

The quiet hand ticks on amid the din.

The guns again

Rise to a last fury, to a rage, a lust:

Kill ! Pound ! Kill ! Pound ! Pound !

Now comes the thrust !

My part . . . dizziness . . . will . . . but trust

These men. The great guns rise;

Their fury seems to burst the earth and skies !

They lift.

Gather, heart, all thoughts that drift;

Be steel, soul,

Compress thyself

Into a round, bright whole.

I cannot speak.

Time. Time !

I hear my whistle shriek,

Between teeth set;

I fling an arm up,

Scramble up the grime

Over the parapet !

I'm up. Go on.  
Something meets us.  
Head down into the storm that greets us.  
A wail.  
Lights. Blurr.  
Gone.  
On, on. Leăd. Leăd. Hail.  
Spatter. Whirr ! Whirr !  
*" Toward that patch of brown ;  
Direction left."* Bullets a stream.  
Devouring thought crying in a dream.  
Men, crumpled, going down. . . .  
Go on. Go.  
Deafness. Numbness. The loudening tornado.  
Bullets. Mud. Stumbling and skating.  
My voice's strangled shout :  
*" Steady pace, boys !"*  
The still light : gladness.  
*" Look, sir. Look out !"*  
Ha ! ha ! Bunched figures waiting.  
Revolver levelled quick !  
Flick ! Flick !  
Red as blood.  
Germans. Germans.  
Good ! O good !  
Cool madness.

X.—THE LAST MORNING

COME now, O Death,  
While I am proud,  
While joy and awe are breath,  
And heart beats loud !

While all around me stand  
Men that I love,  
The wind blaes aloud, the grand  
Sun wheels above.

Naked I stand to-day  
Before my doom,  
Welcome what comes my way,  
Whatever come.

What is there more to ask  
Than that I have ?—  
Companions, love, a task,  
And a deep grave !

Come then, Eternity,  
If thou my lot;  
Having been thus, I cannot be  
As if I had not.

Naked I wait my doom !  
Earth enough shroud !  
Death, in thy narrow room  
Man can lie proud !

## XI.—FULFILMENT

Was there love once ? I have forgotten her.  
Was there grief once ? grief yet is mine.  
Other loves I have, men rough, but men who stir  
More grief, more joy, than love of thee and thine.

Faces cheerful, full of whimsical mirth,  
Lined by the wind, burned by the sun;  
Bodies enraptured by the abounding earth,  
As whose children we are brethren : one.

And any moment may descend hot death  
To shatter limbs ! pulp, tear, blast  
Beloved soldiers who love rough life and breath  
Not less for dying faithful to the last.

O the fading eyes, the grimed face turned bony,  
Oped mouth gushing, fallen head,  
Lessening pressure of a hand shrunk, clammed,  
and stony !

O sudden spasm, release of the dead !

Was there love once ? I have forgotten her.  
Was there grief once ? grief yet is mine.  
O loved, living, dying, heroic soldier,  
All, all, my joy, my grief, my love, are thine !

## THE DEAD

## I.—THE BURIAL IN FLANDERS

(H. S. G., YPRES, 1916)

THROUGH the light rain I think I see them going,  
Through the light rain under the muffled skies;  
Across the fields a stealthy wet wind wanders,  
The mist bedews their tunics, dizzies their brains.

Shoulder-high, khaki shoulder by shoulder,  
They bear my Boy upon his last journey.  
Night is closing. The wind sighs, ebbs, and  
falters. . . .

They totter dreaming, deem they see his face.

Even as Vikings of old their slaughtered leader  
Upon their shoulders, so now bear they on  
All that remains of Boy, my friend, their leader,  
An officer who died for them under the dawn.

O that I were there that I might carry,  
Might share that bitter load in grief, in pride ! . . .  
I see upon bronze faces love, submission,  
And a dumb sorrow for that cheerful Boy.



Now they arrive. The priest repeats the service.  
The drifting rain obscures.

They are dispersed.  
The dying sun streams out: a moment's radiance;  
The still, wet, glistening grave; the trod sward  
steaming.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sudden great guns startle, echoing on the silence.  
Thunder. Thunder.

HE HAS FALLEN IN' BATTLE.

(O Boy! Boy!)

Lessening now. The rain

Patters anew. Far guns rumble and shudder  
And night descends upon the desolate plain.

LAWFORD,  
*September, 1916.*

## II.—BOY

IN a far field, away from England, lies  
A Boy I friended with a care like love;  
All day the wide earth aches, the cold wind cries,  
The melancholy clouds drive on above.

There, separate from him by a little span,  
Two eagle cousins, generous, reckless, free,  
Two Grenfells, lie, and my Boy is made man,  
One with these elder knights of chivalry.

Boy, who expected not this dreadful day,  
Yet leaped, a soldier, at the sudden call,  
Drank as your fathers, deeper though than they,  
The soldier's cup of anguish, blood, and gall,

Not now as friend, but as a soldier, I  
Salute you fallen; for the Soldier's name  
Our greatest honour is, if worthily  
These wayward hearts assume and bear the same:

The Soldier's is a name none recognize,  
Saving his fellows. Deeds are all his flower.  
He lives, he toils, he suffers, and he dies,  
And if not all in vain this is his dower:

The Soldier is the Martyr of a nation,  
Expresses but is subject to its will;  
His is the Pride ennobles Resignation,  
As his the rebel Spirit-to-fulfil.

Anonymous, he takes his country's name,  
Becomes its blindest vassal—though its lord  
By force of arms; its shame is called his shame,  
As its the glory gathered by his sword.

Lonely he is: he has nor friend nor lover,  
Sith in his body he is dedicate. . . .  
His comrades only share his life, or offer  
Their further deeds to one more heart oblate.

Living, he's made an 'Argument Beyond'  
For others' peace; but when hot wars have birth,  
For all his brothers' safety becomes bond  
To Fate or Whatsoever sways this Earth.

Dying, his mangled body, to inter it,  
He doth bequeath him into comrade hands;  
His soul he renders to some Captain Spirit  
That knows, admires, pities, and understands!

All this you knew by that which doth reside  
Deeper than learning; by apprehension  
Of ancient, dark, and melancholy pride  
You were a Soldier true, and died as one.

All day the cold wind cries, the clouds unroll;  
But to the cloud and wind I cry, "Be still!"  
What need of comfort has the heroic soul?  
What soldier finds a soldier's grave is chill?

LAWFORD,  
*September, 1916.*

III.—PLAINT OF FRIENDSHIP BY DEATH  
BROKEN

(R. P., Loos, 1915)

GOD, if Thou livest, Thine eye on me bend,  
And stay my grief and bring my pain to end:  
Pain for my lost, the deepest, rarest friend  
*Man ever had, whence groweth this despair.*

I had a friend: but, O! he is now dead;  
I had a vision: for which he has bled:  
I had happiness: but it is fled.  
*God help me now, for I must needs despair.*

His eyes were dark and sad, yet never sad;  
In them moved sombre figures sable-clad;  
They were the deepest eyes man ever had,  
They were my solemn joy—*now my despair.*

In my perpetual night they on me look,  
Reading me slowly; and I cannot brook  
Their silent beauty, for nor crack nor nook  
Can cover me but they shall find me there.

His face was straight, his mouth was wide yet  
trim;

His hair was tangled black, and through its dim  
Softness his perplexed hand would writhe and  
swim—

Hands that were small on arms strong-knit  
yet spare.

He stood no taller than our common span,  
Swam but nor farther leaped nor faster ran;  
I know him spirit now, who seemed a man.

*God help me now, for I must needs despair.*

His voice was low and clear, yet it could rise  
And beat in indignation at the skies;  
Then no man dared to meet his fire-filled eyes,  
And even I, his own friend, did not dare.

With humorous wistfulness he spoke to us,  
Yet there was something more mysterious,  
Beyond his words or silence, glorious:

I know not what, but we could feel it there.

I mind now how we sat one winter night  
While past his open window raced the bright  
Snow-torrent golden in the hot firelight. . . .

I see him smiling at the streamered air.

I watched him to the open window go,  
And lean long smiling, whispering to the snow,  
Play with his hands amid the fiery flow  
And when he turned it flamed amid his hair.

Without arose a sudden bell's huge clang  
Until a thousand bells in answer rang  
And midnight Oxford hummed and reeled and  
sang  
Under the whitening fury of the air.

His figure standing in the fiery room . . .  
Behind him the snow seething through the  
gloom . . .  
The great bells shaking, thundering out their  
doom . . .  
Soft Fiery Snow and Night his being were.

Yet he could be simply glad and take his choice,  
Walking spring woods, mimicking each bird  
voice;  
When he was glad we learned how to rejoice:  
If the birds sing, 'tis to my spite they dare.

All women loved him, yet his mother won  
His tenderness alone, for Moon and Sun  
And Rain were for him sister, brother, lovèd one,  
And in their life he took an equal share.

Strength he had, too; strength of unruined will  
Buttressed his natural charity, and ill  
Fared it with him who sought his good to kill:  
    He was its Prince and Champion anywhere.

Yet he had weakness, for he burned too fast;  
And his unrecked-of body at the last  
He in impatience on the bayonets cast,  
    Body whose spirit had outsoared them there.

I had a friend, but, O ! he is now dead.  
Fate would not let me follow where he led.  
In him I had happiness. But he is dead.  
    *God help me now, for I must needs despair.*

God, if Thou livest, and indeed didst send  
Thine only Son to be to all a Friend,  
Bid His dark, pitying eyes upon me bend,  
    And His hand heal, or *I must needs despair.*

IN HOSPITAL,  
    *Autumn, 1915.*



#### IV.—BY THE WOOD

How still the day is, and the air how bright !  
A thrush sings and is silent in the wood ;  
The hillside sleeps dizzy with heat and light ;  
A rhythmic murmur fills the quietude ;  
A woodpecker prolongs his leisured flight,  
Rising and falling on the solitude.

But there are those who far from yon wood lie,  
Buried within the trench where all were found.  
A weight of mould oppresses every eye,  
Within that cabin close their limbs are bound,  
And there they rot amid the long profound,  
Disastrous silence of grey earth and sky.

These once, too, rested where now rests but one,  
Who scarce can lift his panged and heavy head,  
Who drinks in grief the hot light of the sun,  
Whose eyes watch dully the green branches  
    spread,  
Who feels his currents ever slower run,  
Whose lips repeat a silent ' . . . Dead ! all dead ! '

O youths to come shall drink air warm and  
bright,  
Shall hear the bird cry in the sunny wood,  
All my Young England fell to-day in fight:  
That bird, that wood, was ransomed by our  
blood !

I pray you when the drum rolls let your mood  
Be worthy of our deaths and your delight.

1916.

## THE AFTERMATH

I.—AT THE EBB

ALONE upon the monotonous ocean's verge  
I take my stand, and view with heavy eye  
The grey wave rise. I hear its sullen surge,  
Its bubbling rush and sudden downward sigh. . . .

My friends are dead . . . there fades from me the  
light  
Of her warm face I loved; upon me stare  
In the dull noon or deadeast hour of night  
The smiling lips and chill eyes of Despair.

A light wind blows. . . . I hear the low wave  
steal  
In and collapse like a despondent breath.  
My life has ebbed: I neither see nor feel:  
I am suspended between life and death.

Again the wave caves in. O, I am worn  
Smoother than any pebble on the beach!  
I would dissolve to that whence I was born,  
Or alway bide beyond the long wave's reach.

O Will, thou only strengthener of man's heart  
When all is gone—love and the love of friends,  
When even Earth's comfort has become a part  
Of that futility nor breaks nor mends:

Strengthen me now against these utmost wrongs;  
Stay my wrecked spirit within thy control,  
That men may find some fury in my songs  
Which, like strong wine, shall fortify the soul.

BENEATH GOLD CAP,  
*June, 1916.*

## II.—ALONE

THE grey wind and the grey sea  
Tossing under the long grey sky. . . .  
My heart is lonelier than the wind;  
My heart is emptier than the sky,  
And beats more heavily  
Than the cold surge beneath the gull,  
Wheeling with his reiterant cry  
Of loneliness. . . . All, all is lone:  
Alone ! . . .

And so am I.

### III.—THANKSGIVING

AMAZEMENT fills my heart to-night,  
Amaze and awful fears;  
I am a ship that sees no light,  
But blindly onward steers.

Flung toward heaven's toppling rage,  
Sunk between steep and steep,  
A lost and wondrous fight I wage  
With the embattled deep.

I neither know nor care at length  
Where drives the storm about;  
Only I summon all my strength  
And swear to ride it out.

Yet give I thanks; despite these wars,  
My ship—though blindly blown,  
Long lost to sun or moon or stars—  
Still stands up alone.  
I need no trust in borrowed spars;  
My strength is yet my own.

#### IV.—ANNIHILATED

UPON the sweltering sea's enormous round,  
As smoke, adazzle, brown and brown and gold,  
A hushed light falls. . . .

Then clouds without a sound  
Darken the sea within their curtain's fold.

The sombre clouds through which the sick sun  
climbs

Smoke slowly on. Below there is no breath.

The long black beach turns livid.

The sea chimes.

I taste the fulness of my spirit's death.



V.—SHUT OF NIGHT

THE sea darkens. Waves roar and rush.  
The wind rises. The last birds haste.  
One star over eve's bitter flush  
Spills on the spouting waste.

Loud and louder the darkened sea.  
The wind shrills on a monotone.  
Sky and deep, wrecked confusedly,  
Travail and cry as one.

Long I look on the deepening sky,  
The chill star, the forlorn sea breaking;  
For what does my spirit cry ?  
For what is my heart so aching ?

Is it home ? but I have no home.  
Is it tears ? but I no more weep.  
Is it love ? love went by dumb.  
Is it sleep ? but I would not sleep.

Must I fare, then, in fear and fever  
On a journey become thrice far—  
Whose sun has gone down for ever,  
Whose night brings no guiding star ?

The wind roars, and an ashen beam  
Waving up shrinks away in haste.  
The waves crash. The star's trickling gleam  
Travels the warring waste.

I look up. In the windy height  
The lone orb, serene and afar,  
Shakes with excess of her light. . . .

Beauty, be thou my star !

## VI.—THE FULL HEART

ALONE on the shore in the pause of the night-  
time

I stand and I hear the long wind blow light;  
I view the constellations quietly, quietly burning;  
I hear the wave fall in the hush of the night.

Long after I am dead, ended this bitter journey,  
Many another whose heart holds no light  
Shall your solemn sweetness, hush, awe, and  
comfort,  
O my companions, Wind, Waters, Stars, and  
Night.

NEAR GOLD CAP,  
1916.

VII.—SONNET: OUR DEAD

THEY have not gone from us. O no! they are  
The inmost essence of each thing that is  
Perfect for us; they flame in every star;  
The trees are emerald with their presences.  
They are not gone from us; they do not roam  
The flaw and turmoil of the lower deep,  
But have now made the whole wide world their  
home,  
And in its loveliness themselves they steep.

They fail not ever; theirs is the diurn  
Splendour of sunny hill and forest grave;  
In every rainbow's glittering drop they burn;  
They dazzle in the massed clouds' architrave;  
They chant on every wind, and they return  
In the long roll of any deep blue wave.

### VIII.—DELIVERANCE

Out of the Night ! out of the Night I come :  
Free at last : the whole world is my home :  
I have lost self : I look not on myself again,  
But if I do I see a man among men.

Out of the Night ! out of the Night, O Flesh :  
Soul I know not from Body within thy mesh :  
Accepting all that is, I cannot divide the same :  
I accept the smoke because I accept the flame.

Out of the Night ! out of the Night, O Friends :  
O all my dead, think ye our friendship ends ?  
Harold, Kenneth, Dick, many hearts that were  
true,  
While I breathe breath, I am breathing you.

Out of the Night ! out of the Night, O Power :  
Many a fight to be won, many an awful hour ;  
Many an hour to wish death ere I go to death,  
Many an hour to bless breath ere I cease from  
breath.

Out of the Night ! out of the Night, O Soul:  
Give thanks to the Night: Night and Day are  
the Whole.

I count mere life-breath nothing now I know  
Life's worth  
Lies all in spending ! that known, love Life and  
Earth.

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BOOK II  
A FAUN'S HOLIDAY

TO MY BROTHER  
PHILIP NICHOLS



‘ O Fantaisie, emporte-moi sur tes ailes pour désenchanter ma tristesse !’

FLAUBERT.

Roughly planned in Spring, 1914, at Oxford. "Mid-day in Arcadia" composed July, 1914; "Catch for Spring" adapted from version of 1912 during the same month: both at Grayshott. Taken up again in February, 1916, continued at the Hut, Bray, and, after being frequently interrupted, finished on February 18, 1917, at Ilslington.

The author intends the "hulli" and the "lulli" of the Faun's call in 'Faun's Rally' to be pronounced as if they rhymed with such a word as "fully."

## A FAUN'S HOLIDAY

### I

*Of the  
Faun's  
Awakening.* HARK ! a sound. Is it I sleep ?  
Wake I ? or do my senses keep  
Commune yet with thoughtful night  
And dream they feel, not see, the light  
That, with a chord as if a lyre  
Were upward swept by tongues of fire,  
Spreads in all-seeing majesty  
Over crag, dale, curved shore, and sea?

If this be sleep, I do not sleep.  
I hear the little woodnote weep  
Of a shy, darkling bird which cries  
In a sweet-fluted, sharp surprise  
At glimpse of me, the faun-beast, sleeping  
Nigh under her. My crook'd leg, sweeping  
Some dream away, perhaps, awoke her,  
For dew shook from a bough doth soak her.

And all elsewhere how still it is !—  
The mist beyond the precipice

Smokes gently up. The bushes hang  
Over the gulph 'cross which I sprang  
Last midnight,—though the unicorn,  
Who with clanged hooves and lowered horn  
Raging pursued, now hidden lies  
Amid the cragside dewberries  
And sweats his frosty flanks in sleep,  
Dreaming he views again my leap  
Thrice hazardous.

The silver chasm  
Sighs, and many a blithe phantasm  
Turns in the sunlight's quivering ray.  
I couch in peace. Thoughts fond and gay  
Feed on my sense of maiden hours  
And earth refreshed by suns and showers  
Of nightly dew and heavy quiet.—  
Though last night rang with dinning riot:  
Dionysos in headlong mood  
Ranged through the labyrinthine wood;  
Fleet maids sped, yelping, on with him,  
Brandishing a torn heifer's limb,  
Dissonant cymbals, or black bowl  
Of wine and blood; a wolfish howl  
Fled ululant with them. . . .

Now there is  
Depth, the white mist, the great sun, peace.

Too numb such sunshine!—Let me hence  
Out of the solemn imminence

Of yon chill spire whose shadow creeps  
Toward me from the stagnant deeps  
Of the ravine. For now I will  
Descend and take again my fill  
Of fancy wild and musing joy,  
Such as each dawn brings to alloy  
The long affliction of a spirit  
Who a complete world did inherit,  
And feels it crumbling.

I will down  
Whither twin bluffs of sheer stone frown  
Over sunk seas of billowing pine  
Terrace on terrace, line on line,  
Below whose heads the broad downs slope  
Away, away till senses grope  
At something rather felt than seen:  
The sea,—not wave-tops, but a sheen  
Under the dazed and distant sky. . . .  
Curled on a cliff-top let me lie.  
(For yonder, hap, a breeze is blowing,  
And the sun's first gleam is showing  
Under far wreckage: since our height  
Inherits day while yet their light  
Quakes gold under the low clouds' rift.)  
Down, then ! Miraculously swift  
These limbs the gods have given me ! . .  
Couched mid the gorse, anon I see,  
Opposing this my bluff, the face  
Of the sheer rock, and 'long it trace

A sill scarce ample for a goat,  
Yet midway in the ledge-path note  
A cave's mouth, which thick creepers hide  
Fallen in a silvery tide  
From a slant crevice overhead.  
And, lo ! the creeper stirs, is shed—  
And all falls quiet.

Till at last  
Issues a voice deep, young and vast:

## II

*Centaur.* Up ! the ag'd centaurs lie yet sleeping,  
While crouch I palled of this cavern lair  
And watch the stretched sea-eagle sweeping  
Down the grey-blue drizzling air.  
The sea-nymphs, too, will now be waking,  
If sickle-eyed they have not played  
Across the moonlight sets me aching,  
Longing and slinking, half afraid,  
Down the feathery, tawny sand  
On sighing tread  
Deep into banks of glistening shell,  
To halt in dread  
Lest my hoof-scrunch break the spell  
Of the syren-chants that swell  
From the dim shoals toward the land.

But this morn the breeze is blowing  
Freshly: I hear lightly flowing

THE  
CENTAUR  
MORNIN  
SONG

From the bending giant beam  
Bars the forehead of our door  
The golden raindrops in a stream  
Pattering on the steamy floor.

*Faun.* It is the Centaur's voice I hear !  
Young and lusty, deep and clear :  
And the Panisks at his voice  
In their fastnesses rejoice,  
Emerging from the creviced crag  
Or cave beneath the mountain's jag,  
Merry, shaggy, light of hoof,  
To run along the narrow roof,  
And upon the shelvèd height  
Dance before the swimming light.

*Centaur.* And I see upon the ledge,  
Astir over the hanging edge,  
A russet briar cold with dew  
And beyond, forlornly pent  
In a grey cloud's gliding rent,  
A pure pool of the brightest blue :  
So near it seems I've but to cast  
A flint out on the forward vast  
To mark it flashing blithely through !

And now at last !  
At last  
The great Sun  
The Sudden One,

THE  
CENTAUR'S  
MORNING  
SONG  
(continued).

Stamps upon the cloudy floor;  
The heavens are split, and through the floor  
Heaven's golden treasures tumbling pour. . . .  
And the Sun himself, divine,  
Doth descend  
In such a bursting blaze of shine  
That his glorious hair is shook  
Over the wide world's craggiest end !  
And, even I, I dare not look.

\* \* \* \* \*

I will shout ! I will ramp !  
Just three bounds: then out and stamp  
Where the air like water is  
Eddying up over the precipice;—  
Wind with an edge to it, sea-damp,  
Blowing from the canyon's race  
Where the dripping sea-wind heaves  
Through a tunnel of the rocks  
Sea-water up in thunderous sheaves  
Against the precipitous water-rapids,  
To whip from off th' high-hurtled shocks  
Bursts of mist which soak the leaves  
Of each scented bush that cleaves  
To the cliffs. Till Fauns and Lapiths  
Dance in the sun-bewildered brakes,  
Till even flushed Silenus wakes,  
And—with a short deep-throated troll  
To the wind and to the wine,



Both delirious, both divine !—  
Starts, as he drains the tilted bowl,  
At din, to rolling uproar grown,  
Of rocks dislodged and bounding down,  
With splinter of pines and flint-shocked flashes,  
From the ridge whereon we dance  
In a loud exuberance  
Of rattling hoofs whose echoes drown  
The squealing joy or reedy pining  
Of Pan's pipe, where Pan reclining  
Plays in the clouded mountain's crown !

### III

*the Faun  
vails the  
centaur.*

*Faun.* It is the Centaur's voice I hear.  
The creeper tresses toss with fear,  
Then part before a pow'rful hand.  
See, see, O see the Centaur stand  
With ruggèd head erect and proud,  
Whose rounded mouth yet chants aloud  
The Joy of Mind fulfilled in Force:  
Glory of Man, glory of Horse.

Hail thou, the sov'reign of the hill !  
Hail thou, upon whose locks distil  
Fresh dews when mid majestic night  
Thou papest, hid, along the height.  
Thine are the solitudes of snow  
Between bare peaks, thy hooves also

Are heard within the dusk defile  
Where Titans of a sunless while  
Fashioned huge sphinxes in whose eyes  
The Kite now skulks or, girding, cries.  
Thine, too, the sole and sinking pine  
Burned by the sunset—ay, and thine  
The ledges whence a sudden sift  
Of snow sighs downward, thine the swift  
Uproar of avalanche and all  
The mountain echoes. To thee call,  
When the snow melts and there are seen  
Crocuses blazing mid the green  
Of the dewed grass, the Sylvan folk:  
The Dryads from the leafless oak  
Or budded elder, that at length  
Thou mayst release them by the strength  
Of thy tough fingers; 'tis on thee  
The nymphs cry should the runnels be  
Exhausted of the midsummer sun,  
Sith, stamping, thou canst make to run  
The hoarded waters of the wold.  
And among men thou art of old  
Thought's emblem: for to thee belong  
All gifts of deep, wise, epic song.  
Hail, then, whom Earth and mankind hails.  
And Ocean, whose high-spouting whales  
And dripping serpents, that arise  
Swinging their gold crests to the skies  
To drink in all thy bold descant

Hail, though they cannot view thee chant,  
As I who now behold in sooth  
Thy lighted eyes and singing mouth.

*Of the  
Centaur's  
Beauty.* O grape-hung locks ! glorious face,  
Capacious frame, sinewy grace  
Of arm that lifts a skully lyre  
Whose dithyramb whirls ever higher !  
Deep breast-bone, belly, curvèd thews—  
Such as the tussling oak doth use  
Upon the crumbled scarp to grip—  
Striking from trunk down through the hip  
Into the stallion's massive shoulders  
Glossy as moonlit ice-bound boulders !  
Stiff, stalwart forelegs, heavy hoof  
Yet fleeter far on heights aloof  
Than ev'n such doubled hares as race  
Blue 'thwart dim fells, or, speck in space,  
Osprey, gale-swept across the tides !  
Thy man's trunk glisters; on thy sides  
A soft and silver shagginess,  
Inviting slim hands to caress,  
Hangs dewy——

*Centaur.* Faun, Faun, art thou near ?

*Faun.* Behold me stand, proud Centaur, here  
Upon the bluff where 'neath me lies  
The sunned pool of the precipice.

*Of the Centaur's Ardour.* Centaur. Faun, in my veins the blood 'gins race,  
The new sun sweats upon my face,  
Dazzles my pupils, golden swims  
Over my flushed and fervid limbs.  
I feel in me my spirit rise  
Griffon-like flogging up tall skies.  
Now is the Morning of the World,  
And through my heart a flood is hurled  
Of onerous joyance, of desire  
To clutch the sun and spill its fire  
Down heaven's blue bulwarks ! to snatch life  
And drain its lusty full in strife  
Of all my body with the bent  
Wrestle of every element:  
Close with the whirlwind, front the tide  
And turn its moony press aside.

But in the world I cannot find  
A match in strength, a foe in mind. . . .  
At dawn, at eve the waters burn;  
All night the constellations turn  
Round the dark pole, and none knows why. . .  
None seeks to know save only I  
And thou, O Faun. We are alone. . . .  
Yet sometimes, when the wind is gone  
And all below shines sunned and still,  
I feel depart from me the will  
Merely to know, to know and wait:  
I would do more: I would create.



#### IV

*And of  
the Manner  
of the  
Running.*

Away! My rapping footfalls drown  
All but the sobbing of the wind  
Within my ears and loud behind  
The thunder of the Centaur's hooves  
Where, like a hailstorm, down he moves.  
Past me the spun pines rock and hiss,  
Behind my feet stones pelted whizz,  
Hills rise before me, backward flow,  
The bare downs, bright'ning, mount below. . . .  
On. On. Down. Down. But, ah, no more!  
My breath comes keener than the frore  
Indraught of age-long mountain frost;  
My head turns dizzy, feet are lost.  
Yet scamper feet! A rock—a mound:  
Rap! Rap! I soar it at a bound.  
On. On. Down. Down. A sudden brook,  
And now—in mid-air—lo! there look  
Laughingly up at me the eyes  
Of Hyads, and their fading cries  
Ring in my ears. Can they have seen  
The Centaur hurtle by between  
Them and the clouds? The downs up-fly.  
Now earth's bowl rocks and reels the sky  
And through my chilly flaming tears  
The molten sun swoops, bursts, and veers. . . .

Still rap my hoofs, though but the sound  
 Tells me they yet rocket the ground.  
 The uproar loudens more behind.  
 My crook'd legs cross, my eyes go blind.  
 I claw the sky: for, O ! I can  
 Scarce lurch. I feel the sudden fan  
 Of the great Centaur's galey breath  
 Upon my nape, and like chill death  
 His hand descends. But, ah ! he laughs  
 Even as Bacchus when he quaffs  
 In jest or taunt a double bowl.

*The Faun  
 falls.*

I, choking, reel, and, tripping, roll  
 Wildly aside. See ! as I fall  
 A rampant shape majestic  
 Storms vehement by, and, storming, swings  
 Hand across rushing lyre, which rings  
 To strains, like rolling breakers tossed  
 High o'er an adamantine coast,  
 In praise of elemental Mirth,  
 Strength, Beauty and the Golden Earth !

## V

*Of Downs  
 beloved  
 by Pan.*

Beyond the rocks, below the trees,  
 The great downs lie; nought but the breeze  
 Is heard upon them. All day long  
 The shadows of the great clouds throng  
 Across their sides: a noiseless rout.  
 Sometimes a peewit, blown about

By airy surge, cries a lone cry  
Ere hurtled down the clarid sky;  
Sometimes is heard a shepherd's voice  
Shouting, and after it the noise  
Of many-pattering crowded sheep  
Herded within the gay dog's keep,  
Who also, barking, shouts. Save these  
Nought breaks the breezy silences  
Of the green sun-swept, cloud-swept spaces. . . .

Such downs Pan loves, and ofttime places  
His lonely altars on them.

I

One of such now behold. A high  
Mound bears it, and its nakedness  
Of festal fruit and fragrant dress  
Hints 'tis new-built.

Up, then, and sound  
A rally to the sacred ground:

*Faun.* Come ye, merry shepherds all,  
Hulli-lulli-li-lo!  
Listen to my piping call:  
Hulli-li-lo!  
Hasten to Pan's festival;  
Leave your sheep.  
Cannot Pan a shrewd watch keep  
O'er his own?

FAUN'S  
RALLY.



Safe are they as pent in stall;  
Safe are they, for Pan has thrown  
Fear about them like a wall.

Wherefore, shepherds, hither run.

I have set my pipes to lip;  
Now they cry despondingly  
As mid shaken locks I dip.  
Now shrill—as hark!—I lift them high  
To swirl the tune about the sky!  
Up and down and round the sky  
Till want I further force to blow. . . .  
Wherefore, shepherds, hither run,  
Dance behind me as I skip;  
Strike the tóssed támbours in únison,  
Dance, dance and make to dance the sun  
To your Hulli-li-lo!

*Shepherds.* Faun, I come. I hear. We  
hear—

*Faun.* This my Hulli-li-lo:  
Now afar and now anear.

*Shepherds.* Never sped the midnight deer  
Half so fast  
'Fore Diana's star-ringed spear  
As now haste we to appear  
At thy Hulli-li-lo!

*Faun.* Joy, O shepherds, at the sound:  
Hulli-lulli-li-lo!  
Pan's new altar I have found:  
Hulli-li-lo!  
Cowslips prank its holy mound,  
With ivy have I wreathed it round—  
But not yet  
Is the altar's dress complete  
Till with flowers its horns are bound.

*Shepherds.* Faun, we hear, and from the  
brook  
Flags are pulled; and now we hook  
Honeysuckle high, low  
Down to us with shepherd's crook;  
Breathing floss,  
Clematis twines, rushy stook,  
Apple blossom, down is shook  
At thy Hulli-li-lo!

*Faun.* Wreathe the pedestal anew;  
Hulli-lulli-li-lo!  
Scatter violets scattering dew;  
Hulli-li-lo!  
Honey that the brown bees brew  
Pour, and rosy blossom strew;  
Spill such wine  
As in dim-bloomed clusters grew  
On your father's father's vine.

Dance you now.  
I my pipe cease—thus—to blow:  
Dance you on.  
Dance about the sacred mound,  
Dance when every sound is gone. . . .  
Now the timbrels softly, sprightly  
Beat, and foot it gaily, lightly;  
'Tiptoe o'er the secret ground,  
Dance the round.

Next, to the sole, trilling flute  
And your own subdued laughter  
Flutter all in throngs and mazes,  
Chase in streams of ardent faces,  
With bright eyes and oped mouth mute.  
Now alone,  
One by one,  
Dance and dream, and dreaming float  
Till the multitude drifts after,  
And I wake a quicker note:  
Clap your hands aloft and cry;  
Surge in line tumultuously;  
Cry, and with a whirl of voices  
Fright the pigeons whickering by!  
Praise the God of field and fold!  
Shout until the hills have told,  
By their sudden echoes flying,  
Flying, crying, falling, dying,

That upon his name we call,  
Who beside the river lying  
Hears us keep his festival.

## VI

*The Faun  
enters the  
Valley.*

Wearied of solitary hills,  
On which the wannish sunlight spills,  
And which the glooms of high clouds cross,  
Clouds wandering ever at a loss  
About th' immeasurable sky,  
I will descend. And by-and-by  
Glimpse beneath the shouldered down  
A hamlet reeking golden-brown;  
Creep through a willow copse to view  
Under an orchard avenue,  
A lithe girl in a sun-splashed smock  
Calling her perch'd pigeon flock,  
And as they coo and flutter over  
Laughing and carolling of her lover.

*Girl. 'Little pigeon, grave and fleet'—*  
All the golden grain you'd eat,  
Greedy! let the little bird  
Pick some. Sweet, your cooing's heard;  
You shall have this. There! Be bolder:  
Light you now upon my shoulder. . . .  
Cooroo? Cooroo in my ear?  
Darling, yes, I hear, I hear:

From this hand, then, you shall pluck it.  
Foolish love ! your wings have struck it,  
Spilt the grain the grass among.  
—Flutter ! Flutter !—where's my song ?  
' *Little pigeon, grave and fleet* '—  
Too late now your wings you beat  
By my face : look in the ground ;  
There, they say, all gold is found.

Little pigeon, grave and fleet,  
    Eye-of-fire, sweet Snowy-wings,  
Think you that you can discover  
    On what great green down my lover  
Lies by his sunny sheep and sings ?

THE  
PIGEON  
SONG.

If you can, O go and greet  
    Him from me ; say : She is waiting. . . .  
Not for him, O no ! but, sweet,  
    Say June's nigh and doves, remating,  
Fill the dancing noontide heat  
    With melodious debating.

Say the swift swoops from the beam ;  
    Soon the cuckoo must cease calling ;  
Kingcups flare beside the stream,  
    That not glides now but runs brawling ;  
That wet roses are asteam  
    In the sun and will be falling.

Say the chestnut sheds his bloom;  
Honey from straw livings oozes;  
There's a nightjar in the coombe;  
Venus nightly burns, and chooses  
Most to blaze above my room;  
That the laggard 'tis that loses.

Say the nights are warm and free,  
And the great stars swarm above him;  
But soon starless night must be.  
Yet if all these do not move him,  
Tell, O tell—but not too plainly!—  
That I long for him and love him.

Little pigeon, grave and fleet,  
Fly you swiftly, tell him this;  
And I'll give you grain so golden  
Midas' self has ne'er beholden  
Aught so gold, and—yes!—a kiss.

Smiling at her eager voice,  
I will grant the girl her choice,  
Whispering to the pigeon: "Lo!  
Yon's the way for you to go:  
Over the willows, past the copse,  
To where a sylph-like lime-tree tops  
A lonely knoll; then on and on  
Toward where yesternight there shone  
A silver comet, scarce descried,  
Against the fainting eventide."

## VII

*Of the  
Faun's  
Whimseys.* Away then ! crashing through the wood,  
Prancing in a whimsey mood,  
To yowl as a she-wolf does at dark  
Until th' infuriate watch-dogs bark;  
Or bid hushed tales of ghosts go round,  
Of warnings heard, but nothing found,  
By whistling at the village boor;  
Or poke my rogue face round a door  
And scare a huffy wife to fits,  
Who swears, " 'Tis Pan himself !" or, " It's  
That grizzled sailor-man who slew  
His mate 'twixt Bogs and Dead Man's Yew !"  
Next through the dairy steal to slake  
My thirst with cream, with honeycake  
Cram my sweet maw; slip in the churn  
A farm cat, that the tub may turn  
And fright maid Molly. I will seek  
Strawberries and stain chin, mouth and cheek  
With nuzzling in their scarlet bowl;  
Then in the goodman's bed I'll roll  
Because he loves me not; I'll sing  
Until the crowded rafters ring  
The while about my ears I hang  
Bobbed cherries. . . . Lastly I will clang

Among the clattering pots and pans,  
Shout, cry "Oh help!" snatch up a man's  
Cloak, and slip out.

*The  
Pursuit.*

Whoop! Whoop! They run:  
The hare once spied, the hunt's begun!—  
Goodman and goodman's wife, pert Polly,  
Clown Colin, Wiggen and maid Molly,  
Pant, crying, "Thief!" The while behind  
Shrunk Dorcas hops, and fills the wind  
With apish merriment, shrill malice,  
And cries of—"Well run, Poll! Run, Alice!  
Run, child! The master's cloak and all!  
How sad the goodman's ta'en a fall!  
Mistress down, too—he! he! what pity!  
Run, Alice child, my bird, my pretty;  
Show 'em how nimble thou canst be,—  
Ay, but the girl runs prettily.  
Run, Hobbinol, thou gawky man!  
Thou mayest kiss if catch thou can!  
Odd's me! and what's it all about?  
A thief? That mischief Faun!"

A shout

Startles the pigeons from the croft:  
"We've circled him!" "He's in the loft."  
But as they, silent, crowd unto 't  
I jump. For am not I a goat?  
From out the hayloft's height I leap  
O'er their craned heads into the deep  
Grass of the orchard. Thence I run



Across lush meadows. One by one  
They fall behind. . . .

A scarecrow I  
Now seek, and 'bout it carefully  
Enwrap the newly pilfered cloak. . . .  
Scarecrows are such poor crazy folk. . . .

## VIII

*The  
Faun  
hides.* So to a thorny thicket dense  
With rosy-coloured may-bloom, whence  
I can hear a torrent rumble,  
And, peering forth, behold it tumble  
Cumbrously into a pool whose white  
Tumult sears the giddied sight.  
There, half dozed, silent, smile to hear  
A babble of voices drawing near,  
Spy many a boy and laughing lass  
Racing hands-linked across the grass.

*Boys and Girls.* Now has the blue-  
eyed Spring  
Sped dancing through the plain.  
Girls weave a daisy chain;  
Boys race beside the sedge;  
Dust fills the blinding lane;  
May lies upon the hedge:  
All creatures love the spring !

A  
CATCH  
FOR  
SPRING.

The clouds laugh on, and would  
Dance with us if they could;  
The larks ascend and shrill;  
A woodpecker fills the wood;  
Jays laugh crossing the hill:  
All creatures love the spring!

The lithe cloud-shadows chase  
Over the whole earth's face,  
And where winds ruffling veer  
O'er wooded streams' dark ways  
Mad fish upscudding steer:  
All creatures love the spring!

Into the dairy cool  
Run, girls, to drink thick cream!  
Race, boys, to where the stream  
Winds through a rumbling pool,  
And your bright bodies fling  
Into the foaming cool!  
For we'll enjoy our spring!

## IX

*Of the  
Fann's  
Journey  
to the  
Sea.* Seaward my forest way I'll take,  
And at a pool's lit quietude slake  
My thirst, and feel a dull flame creep  
Like the first flux of tidal sleep

Through all my limbs. Yet, when I sink  
Sleepward, start wide-eyed up to drink  
The sunned wood's wet deliciousness,  
Touch flowers, and feel the sun's caress  
About my locks, and wander on,  
Or pause to smile up at the sun,  
Guarding my eyes with glowing hand,  
Or, leaned against a beech-trunk, stand  
Watching between the branches' rift,  
As they gently wave and lift  
To the bland breeze softly blowing,  
The noiseless clouds serenely going  
Slowly to the hid, low sea  
I can hear breathing slumberously.  
Till from the woodland I emerge,  
Greeted by a louder surge,  
And from the bushy cliff-top spy  
How the hollow bay doth lie  
One quiver and murmur under the sun,  
And how the lightsome wind-puffs run  
Chasing each other crookedly,  
Over the idly heaving sea.

*Of the  
Sea-  
Horses.* Next I will turn my eyes, perhaps,  
To where the languid waters lapse  
Glittering over a sunburned rock  
Round which the shrieking white gulls flock. . . .  
Thus browsing in my solitude,  
I may remember I've a feud

With the Sea-Horses, once who drave  
 Me from the sea-light of their cave.  
 Enough ! and, crashing down, I come  
 To find them drowsing in their home. . . .  
 So creep I with a crooked stick  
 To where a blinding pool is quick  
 With green electric water-snakes.  
 Sprawling across a rock which bakes  
 I stir the molten till they boil  
 And up my hawthorn kick and coil;  
 Then scamper, rocketing, to the cave,  
 Hurl the stick in. Hark ! how they rave,  
 And plunge up clattering, kicking, neighing,  
 Till Triton on his horn 'gins braying,  
 And each hasteneth to belabour  
 With hooves or tear with teeth his neighbour,  
 And from the cavern's blueness rush  
 Into the simmering beach's hush,  
 To stand, with heaving flanks, agaze  
 At the hot stones and still sea's blaze :  
 Then stampede, scattering high and wide  
 A hail of stones and glittering tide.

## X

*Of  
 the Faun  
 in his  
 Meditation.*

I will walk the sunny wood,  
 Deep and tranquil as my mood,  
 And watch how the honeyed sunlight is  
 Hung in the great boughs of the trees,

And the pattern the branchwork weaves  
Under the panoply of leaves,  
And how high up two butterflies  
Pass, vaulting, out into the skies.  
Or, entering a silent glade,  
Draw a sharp breath and stand dismayed  
At beauty which doth straight present  
Such a spasm of ravishment  
Sight is confused, and doth confess  
Her wreck in voiceless tenderness:  
Seeing the flower-decked cherry-trees—  
Unruffled ever by any breeze,  
Unburned by bright dawn's fiery chill—  
Standing celestially still. . . .

Or lay me down 'neath chestnut boughs,  
And drowse and dream and dream and drowse,  
Drunk with the greenness overhead,  
Until a blossom of sharp red,  
Shook from her high and scalding place,  
Splash with chill scent my upturned face.

## XI

*Of the  
philosopher* But, lo! amid the woodland green  
What mantles of strange blue are seen?  
What sage is he who slowly leads  
Disciples on and little heeds

The holiness of sylvan haunt,  
 Where even the silver bird dare chant  
 But seldom ? where the sunlight lies  
 Here scalding gold, and yonder dies  
 Into a humid, still, green gloom ?  
 Hath not he in the forum room  
 To vent himself, that now with rude  
 Rabble he scareth Solitude  
 From her ultimate hiding-place ?  
 Now steps he forward a slow pace,  
 And 'gins his discourse. Hear him prate,  
 O woods, to silence consecrate ;  
 Hear him, O flowers, whose golden eyes  
 Speak more than all Man's orat'ries !—

*And his*      *Philosopher.* Meanwhile, though nations in  
*Oration.*      distress

Cower at a comet's loveliness  
 Shaken across the midnight sky;  
 Though the wind roars, and Victory,  
 A virgin fierce, on vans of gold  
 Stoops through the cloud's white smother rolled  
 Over the armies' shock and flow  
 Across the broad green hills below,  
 Yet hovers and will not circle down  
 To cast t'ward one the leafy crown;  
 Though men drive galleys' golden beaks  
 To isles beyond the sunset peaks,

And cities on the sea behold  
Whose walls are glass, whose gates are gold,  
Whose turrets, risen in an hour,  
Dazzle between the sun and shower,  
Whose sole inhabitants are kings  
Six cubits high with gryphon's wings  
And beard and mien more glorious  
Than Midas or Assaracus;  
Though priests in many a hill-top fane  
Lift anguished hands—and lift in vain—  
Toward the sun's shaft dancing through  
The bright roof's square of wind-swept blue;  
Though 'cross the stars nightly arise  
The silver fumes of sacrifice;  
Though a new Helen bring new scars,  
Pyres piled upon wrecked golden cars,  
Stacked spears, rolled smoke, and spirits sped  
Like a streaked flame toward the dead:  
Though all these be, yet grows not old  
Delight of sunned and windy wold,  
Of soaking downs aglare, asteam,  
Of still tarns where the yellow gleam  
Of a far sunrise slowly breaks,  
Or sunset strews with golden flakes  
The deeps which soon the stars will throng.

For earth yet keeps her undersong  
Of comfort and of ultimate peace,  
That whoso seeks shall never cease

To hear at dawn or noon or night.  
Joys hath she, too, joys thin and bright,  
'Too thin, too bright, for those to hear  
Who listen with an eager ear,  
Or course about and seek to spy,  
Within an hour, eternity.  
First must the spirit cast aside  
'This world's and next his own poor pride  
And learn the universe to scan  
More as a flower less as a man.  
Then shall he hear the lonely dead  
Sing and the stars sing overhead,  
And every spray upon the heath  
And larks above and ants beneath ;  
The stream shall take him in her arms;  
Blue skies shall rest him in their calms;  
The wind shall be a lovely friend,  
And every leaf and bough shall bend  
Over him with a lover's grace.  
The hills shall bare a perfect face  
Full of a high solemnity;  
The heavenly clouds shall weep, and be  
Content as overhead they swim  
To be high brothers unto him.  
No more shall he feel pitched and hurled  
Uncomprehended into this world  
For every place shall be his place,  
And he shall recognize its face.  
At dawn he shall upon his path;



No sword shall touch him, nor the wrath  
Of the ranked crowd of clamorous men.  
At even he shall home again,  
And lay him down to sleep at ease,  
One with the Night and the Night's peace.  
Ev'n Sorrow, to be escaped of none,  
But a more deep communion  
Shall be to him, and Death at last  
No more dreaded than the Past,  
Whose shadow in the brain of earth  
Informs him now and gave him birth.

*The  
Faun's  
Anger,* Up, O Faun, up ! is he a man  
So dares affront the great god Pan ?  
Creep I now close. . . . (Has he not heard

Ever the lamb cry as the bird  
Descends upon its helpless head  
To pluck its eyes out ? Blank with dread  
Did he ne'er press in stumbling haste  
Over the wide moor's tossing waste ?  
Or, stripped to plunge, did never eye  
The sunned pool smiling treacherously,  
Despair and terror in his heart ?  
Hate on him !)

See: he draws apart  
That with himself he may commune  
The while to a low murmuring tune  
Wrung from a golden-stringed lyre  
The young men chant. Hist ! Draws he nigher ?

Now crouch I mid a thicket where  
 The spicy hedge-rose warms the air  
 With giddy scent, and for an hour  
 Woos with her open-bosomed flower  
 The full gaze of her lord the sun,  
 And through whose thorns the sunbeams run  
 Spangling the cavern of the brake  
 With chequered shade such as the snake  
 Loves to repose in, that the heat  
 Upon his sullen coils may beat,  
 Breeding within his ancient heart  
 Such malice that his tongue must dart  
 Flickering in silence out and in,  
 The while adown his withered skin,  
 From horns above his murderous eyes,  
 The cold surge shudders, ebbs, and dies.

*And of  
 the Trick  
 the Faun  
 played,  
 thereby  
 symbolizing  
 the Rule  
 of Pan  
 in Nature.*

And now yon comes, with solemn head  
 Sunk upon breast, with laurel spread  
 About his thought-bewrinkled brows.  
 All hail, philosopher ! I rouse  
 Thee by a low and single hiss.  
 He is frozen still. A sudden bliss  
 Seizes me, and a branch I shake  
 As gently as an unseen snake  
 Swinging toward him.

But he stands,  
 Clasps and unclasps his gradual hands

In silence save for one long sigh  
Of terror.

And I draw more nigh.  
Beneath his glazèd eyes I sway  
Three leaves upon one stilly spray:  
He blenches.

Ha ! it was well done,  
That final hiss.

I am alone:  
For with a harsh cry he has fled  
Hideously stumbling, and is led  
Speechless away.

The lyre, forgot,  
Lies in the grass. . . .

## XII

*Of the  
Spring,  
Frequent  
Haunt  
of the  
Lonely  
Naiads.* I know a spot  
Where, to the sound of water sighing,  
The Naiads, when the sun is lying  
Heavy on mead and fronded tree,  
When birds are silent and the bee  
Swoons in the dewed heart of the rose,  
Sing hushedly.

I will repose  
Upon its banks and to the spring  
An answer make with hands that cling  
Over this lost lyre's murmurous chords

And with their voiced quiet mingle words  
Such as my shrouded soul affords  
When the warm blood within my veins  
Throbs heavily, and the noon sun reigns,  
Who would heaven and earth unite  
In one blaze of arduous light,  
Till dark woods, fields, bronzed sky, and deep,  
In one maniac dull dream sleep.

### XIII

*The Naiads.* Come, ye sorrowful, and steep  
Your tired brows in a nectarous sleep:  
For our kisses lightlier run  
Than the traceries of the sun  
By the lolling water cast  
Up grey precipices vast,  
Lifting smooth and warm and steep  
Out of the palely shimmering deep.

THE  
NAIADS'  
MUSIC.

Come, ye sorrowful, and take  
Kisses that are but half awake:  
For here are eyes O softer far  
Than the blossom of the star  
Upon the mothy twilit waters,  
And here are mouths whose gentle laughter  
Are but the echoes of the deep  
Laughing and murmuring in its sleep.

Come, ye sorrowful, and see  
The raindrops flaming goldenly  
On the stream's eddies overhead  
And dragonflies with drops of red  
In the crisp surface of each wing  
Threading slant rains that flash and sing,  
Or under the water-lily's cup,  
From darkling depths, roll slowly up  
The bronze flanks of an ancient bream  
Into the hot sun's shattered beam,  
Or over a sunk tree's bubbled bole  
The perch stream in a golden shoal:  
Come, ye sorrowful; our deep  
Holds dreams lovelier than sleep.

But if ye sons of Sorrow come  
Only wishing to be numb :  
Our eyes are sad as bluebell posies,  
Our breasts are soft as silken roses,  
And our hands are tenderer  
Than the breaths that scarce can stir  
The sunlit eglantine that is  
Murmurous with hidden bees.  
Come, ye sorrowful, and steep  
Your tired brows in a nectarous sleep.

Come, ye sorrowful, for here  
No voices sound but fond and clear  
Of mouths as lorn as is the rose  
That under water doth disclose,

Amid her crimson petals torn,  
A heart as golden as the morn ;  
And here are tresses languorous  
As the weeds wander over us,  
And brows as holy and as bland  
As the honey-coloured sand  
Lying sun-entranced below  
The lazy water's limpid flow :  
Come, ye sorrowful, and steep  
Your tired brows in a nectarous sleep.

*The Faun  
prepares  
to reply.*

Sweet water-voices ! now must I  
Unto your sorrowings reply.  
But hark ! or ever there can sound  
On the lull air the first profound  
Few murmurs of my lyre's grave strings,  
A voice uprises. Who now sings  
The noon's and his own tristfulness ?  
A slim youth—in a shepherd's dress,  
Yet without sheep—who careless lies  
Upon the hill. His shepherd guise  
Tokens, perhaps, a poet's heart  
Which joys in wandering apart  
From the dinned ways where chariots roll,  
From the shrill sophist with his shoal  
Of gapers, from the angry mart,  
From the full eyes and empty heart  
Of babbling women, from the neat  
Aridity of paven street,

A heart that wandering, musing, sings  
The joy, depth, pain of simple things:

*The Youth.* The earth is still; only the white  
sun climbs

MIDDAY  
IN ARCADIA.

Through the green silence of the branching limes,  
Whose linked flowers hanging from the still tree-  
top

Distil their soundless syrup drop by drop,  
While 'twixt the starry bracket of their lips  
The black bee drowsing floats and drowsing sips.  
The flimsy leaves hang on the bright blue air  
Calm-suspended. Deep peace is everywhere  
Filled with the murmurous rumour of high noon.  
Earth seems with open eyes to sink and swoon.  
In the sky peace: where nothing moves  
Save the sun that smiles and loves.

A quivering peace is on the grass.  
Through the noon gloam butterflies pass,  
White and hot blue, only to where  
They can float flat and dream on the soft air. . . .  
The trees are asleep, beautiful, slumbrous trees !  
Stirred only by the passion of the breeze,  
That, like a warm wave welling over rocks,  
Loosens and lifts the mass of drowsing locks.  
Earth, too, under the profound grass  
Sleeps and sleeps, and softly heaves her slum-  
brous mass.

The earth sleeps. Sleeps the newly-buried clay  
Or doth divinity trouble it to live alway ?

No voice uplifts from under the rapt crust.  
The dust cries to the unregarding dust.

Over the hill the stopped notes of twin reeds  
Speak like drops from an old wound that bleeds :  
A yokel's pipe an ancient pastoral sings  
Above the innumerable murmur of hid wings.  
I hear the cadence, sorrowful and sweet,  
The oldest burthen of the earth repeat :  
All love, all passion, all strife, all delight  
Are but the dreams that haunt earth's visioned  
night.

In her eternal consciousness the stir  
Of Alexander is no more to her  
Than you or I : being all part of dreams,  
The shadowiest shadow of a thing that seems,  
The images the lone pipe-player sees,  
Sitting and playing to the lone, noon breeze.  
One note, one life !

They sleep : soon we as these !

#### XIV

Now plunge I into deepest woods,  
Where everlastingly there broods  
Such quiet and glamour as must be  
Beneath the threshing upper sea.



Here burns no sun, but tawny light  
 Pervades the vistas still and bright  
 Of mazy boles and fallen leaves. . . .  
 I press yet on. At length there cleaves  
 The twilit hush a pillared gleam.  
 The leafed floor rises. 'Tis a beam  
 Of sunlight fallen in a dell  
 Beyond the mound. There will I dwell,  
 Soothed by sunned quietude. For there  
 A carved rock spouts and moistens the air  
 With gross-mouthed pour and rising spray. . . .  
 But hark ! what festive cries are they  
 Which greet me as I top the mound ?  
 Below, dispersed and sunk around  
 The green and golden of the glen,  
 Lie satyrs ; in a leafy den,  
 Silenus, crowned with vines and roses,  
 Drowzes and starts, blinks, drinks, and dozes.  
 Banqueting dishes strew the grass,  
 Goblets of gold and peacock glass,  
 Flagons, urns, many a brimming bowl,  
 And horns from which the flushed fruits roll.  
 High o'er the feast a fronded ash  
 Hangs full of sunlight, and the splash  
 Of the spring's leap or gurgling flow  
 Into the rippled pool below,  
 Where lilies rock, shakes up a bright  
 Eddy of golden tremulous light  
 Over the leaves. The Oread,

In a hooded lynx pelt clad,  
Smiles where she lolls . . . the while twin fauns  
With stamping hooves and butting horns  
Join combat for a dripping cup  
She bears.

But now a shout goes up  
At sight of me:

*The  
Invitation,*

*Satyr.*      "We feast, we feast;  
For, lo! the flaming sun hath ceased  
To climb the curve of arid sky,  
And his meridian holds on high,  
Narrowing with his scorching beams  
The chestnut's shade, exhausting streams,  
Stilling the woodland singer's note,  
Piercing the eyes, shrinking the throat,  
Saddening the heart of man and beast.  
Yet grieve not we but sprawl and feast.  
Leap down, O Faun, then, from thy rocks,  
Leap down to us. Bedew thy locks  
With such cool spicy nards as dwell  
Within this ribbed and rosy shell;  
Around thy scalded temples twine  
Sprays of this fountain-wetted vine,  
And from this golden jorum sip  
Nectarous liquor—ay, and lip  
Sooth nectarines, thy sunk teeth clench  
In melon dripping sherds, and quench  
Thy salty thirst anew in flow  
Of sparkled or dark wines that glow

With sober warmth and merriment,  
Until our gladdened voices blent  
Awake the vigour of our feet,  
And up we start the grass to beat  
With fervent foot, drink, dance again,  
And, ever at the loud refrain  
Clashing our cups, dance on and on,  
Till the noontide lull is gone."

So join I them, and drink and sup,  
And fill again the great bowl up;  
And, drenched thus down, spin lusty tales  
Of toping bouts 'twixt men and whales;  
Of the East's Emperor who hath  
A pool of wine to be his bath;  
Of Hercules his thirst, and how  
He did all Ethiopia plough,  
And plant with vines, his thirst to sate.  
We will discuss the Ideal State,  
Whose sky is covered by a vine,  
Whose hills are cheese, whose rivers wine,  
Whose trees bear loaves brown, crisp and sweet,  
Whose citizens do nought but eat,  
But eat and drink, drink, eat, and snore,  
And eat again, and wish no more  
Than so to drink, snore, eat; who find  
In this true liberty of mind  
And true equality, in this  
Fraternity, law, earthly bliss.

So swill again and yet again,  
Till a fire flushes all the brain  
And, trolling lustily and long,  
Each hearty throat bursts into song

*Faun and Satyrs.* Avaunt, mild-eyed Melan-  
choly !

A  
DITHYRAM  
TO  
DIONYSO

Welcome, Mirth and mænad Folly !  
See about the lifted bowl,  
Wrinkled on its bossy scroll,  
Ribald nymphs and satyrs jolly  
Tussle with a prancing goat;  
While Silenus, kneeling, drolly  
Proffers a dry bowl unto 't—  
Ay, and round the mazer's brim  
Boisterous Mermen shouting swim,  
And each burly arm lifts up,  
Wine that o'erbrims its conchëd cup;  
Wherefore pour a triple potion:  
If such can be dry in ocean,  
'Tis as Titans we must sup !

Avaunt, brow and visage pious:  
None but Bacchus boys come nigh us !  
Raise the bowl and shout his name:  
Io, Bacchus ! for a flame  
Chafes in our blood, O Bromios !  
Fire no water e'er could quench,  
And its heat must scorify us

If with wine we do not drench.  
Wherefore overbrim the cup:  
This to Jove now drink I up,  
Who upon thy first of days  
Snatched thee and cowed thy natal blaze,  
Even as 'tis now the merry  
Strength of this thy vintaged berry,  
That the scorching danger stays.

To the vine now ! let its golden  
Leaves about our brows be folden.  
To the swarthy hand that trims it !  
To the grape ! the sun that dims it !  
To the pipe that doth embolden  
Purpled stamping feet to riot  
O'er the vatted winepress olden !  
To the cavern's depth, chill, quiet !  
Last to wine's own ruddy sprite,  
Wakes in rheumy eyes a light—  
Ay, and ripens youth to man;  
Wine which more works than wisdom can;  
Wine that welcomes hardy morrows;  
Wine that turns to song our sorrows;  
Wine the only magian !

Deep now ! every bowl enhances  
The world's beauty; see there dances  
In the sky the leaping sun !  
'Nay, can thine eye catch but one ?'

'Six now spin.' 'A seventh advances,  
 Flares and vomits, swerves and blazes,  
 Now bursts and countlessly it prances,  
 Pulsing to my frantic paces !'  
 'I flame,—gyrate !' 'I shoot out heat !'  
 'My tricked speech trips, and trip my feet !'  
 'The earth runs round and heav'n is wheeling !'  
 'I sway; I reel.' 'Earth's wrecked and reeling !'  
 'Dance on.' 'Earth's gone.' 'All's white and  
 clear !'  
 'Ah ! Ah ! Behind the blaze I hear  
 The Oread's laughter pealing !'

Avaunt, grief ! Descend, O holy  
 Fierce Bacchic rapture, divine folly !

## XV

*Of the  
 Faun's  
 Further  
 Wanderings.*

Forth from the forest wend I slowly,  
 While in my ears yet rings the holy  
 Dithyramb. 'The noon is past,  
 But the sun rages. There is cast  
 A dumbness yet o'er earth and sky.  
 Down to the river then will I,  
 Slowly about its depths to swim,  
 While the stream fondles every limb  
 And soothes its ache. Deep I will dip,  
 And, blowing, raise my locks, that drip  
 Till the slim Hyads troop to see,  
 And revel, too, and play with me,

Hanging my ears with humid weed  
 Or mounting me as water steed.  
 Then, musing I will on, and so  
 Stray to where a silver slow  
 River circles through the meads,  
 Wherein the mooching great ox feeds,  
 And turns a slow eye round the sky,  
 Wondering if he can ever die.  
 And there, mayhap, 'twill come to pass  
 I'll hear a sweet voice in the grass,  
 And yet shall mark no singer nigh,  
 Till, gently peering, I espy  
 A solemn, elfish child who sits  
 Unseen mid towering grass, and knits  
 An endless, endless daisy chain,  
 Crooning the while some soft refrain  
 Her mother sings her when she closes  
 Her twilit eyes.

*Little Girl.*                      Three red, red, roses—  
 One each for father and mother, and one,  
 The reddest of all, for her baby son.  
 None for wee Amoret? Oh, none! for she  
 Some day, when she grows up, a red rose will be!

*Of the  
Faun's  
converse  
with  
Small  
e-Child.* Then, crossed-legged mid the meadow-sweet,  
 I will sink down, laugh low, and greet  
 Her blue, inquiring, childish eyes  
 With mine, sharp, merry, brown, and wise,

And tell her tales—of Jack who slew  
Ten giants; or Mirabel who flew  
On a white owl to find the Prince  
And give to him the Golden Quince  
Would change him from a roaring bull  
To a youth blithe and beautiful;  
Or tales of the Goblin and the Sloth,  
Who watched the moon and swore an oath  
To find out what she was: how these  
Explored her mines and found her—cheese.

Thus will I sit and both amuse  
Until I rise and beg excuse:  
Off ‘to El Raschid in Assyria’  
Or ‘the Grand-Duchess of Illyria,’  
Or ‘to ask the maiden moon  
Why one only of her shoon  
She left us last night in the sky,  
And not her silver self, and why  
She always climbs the self-same track?  
Lets no one ever see her back?’

## XVI

But neither to the moon go I  
Or to the river gliding by,  
But to the woods, therein to move  
Among the quiet glades I love,



Desiring nought but aye to see  
The beech, ash, oak, and chestnut tree. . . .  
Till I a nymph meet who persuades  
Me to the broadest of the glades,  
Around whose smooth and sunken space  
The far woods lie. For in this place,  
Deserted but for a mid-grove  
Of maiden trees, bower of the dove,  
Pan plays, and should the sylvans chance,  
Nymphs, fauns, and sylvans, join in dance.

## XVII

*Of the  
immortal  
Dance.* On either hand the slender trees  
Bow to the caressing breeze,  
And shake their shocks of silver light  
Against skies marbled greenish-white,  
Save where, within a rent of blue,  
The tilted slip of moon glints through,  
Glittering upon us as we dance  
With a soft extravagance  
Of limbs as blonde as autumn boughs,  
And gold locks floating from moony brows.  
While anguished Pan the pipes doth blow  
Fond and tremulous and low,  
And anon the timbrel shakes.  
—It is his sudden heart that breaks  
For springs before the world grew old,  
Rich vales, and hill-tops fiery cold!—

He watches the scarce moving skies,  
The trees, the glittering revelries,  
The moon, the dancers lemon-clad:  
The world fantastical and sad.

The high-flung timbrels pulse and knock;  
We follow in a dancing flock,  
Touching each other's finger-tips,  
While from between our parted lips  
The solemn melodies repeat  
The rhythm of our shaken feet.  
Then faster! and the round we trace,  
Hair flowing from elated face,  
Eyes lit, breast bare, with lifted knees,  
And hands that toss as toss the trees. . . .  
And slow again . . . with cumulate motion,  
As the long draw and plunge of ocean  
Bursting in a cloud of spray  
Up a white, deserted bay  
Of the sun-circled green Bermooths,  
Whose blistering sands the cool foam soothes. . . .  
Next the bewildering pipes may sing  
Some simple melody of spring,  
Whose cadences remember yet  
Sadly lost springs that we forget.  
To which as dances April rain  
On a still pool where leans no stain,  
Save of the cloud's pure splendour spread  
Gloriously overhead,

Our fast-flickering feet shall twinkle,  
And our golden anklets tinkle,  
While fair arms in acry sleeves  
Shiver as the poplar's leaves.

And all the while shall Pan sit by  
And play, and pause, perhaps, to sigh,  
Viewing the scarce-moving skies,  
The hushed and glittering revelries,  
The infant moon, the slender trees  
Silvering to the shivery breeze,  
The fair, lorn dancers lemon-clad:  
The world fantastical and sad.

### XVIII

Thus may we dance the light away  
Of yet one more unmemoried day.  
But, the dance ended, I will go  
Beyond the reach of pipes that blow  
A sadness thrilling through my veins. . . .

*The  
Faun's  
sadness.* For now within my spirit reigns  
Shadow: before whose brooding face,  
Silent, there trail on gliding pace  
A multitude of restless Fears,  
Obscure Griefs and obscurer Tears,  
Bewildered Sighs, waned Phantasies,  
And all disastrous Presences,

Mutely prophetic of a Woe  
I know not yet, but I shall know.

Such power Pan's grief hath to oppress,  
And Memory!—since now I guess  
Only too well that there must come  
Twilight, Calamity, and Doom.

For once I saw beneath an oak  
A bard so aged it seemed he woke  
That moment from a sleep of years  
And in his voice were sleep and tears . . .  
Till, wide-eyed, he, raging, spake,  
Rocking as when woodlands shake  
Under the first urge of the wind,  
Whose roaring murk lightens behind.

*The  
Prophecy.*

*Prophetic Bard.* “Be warned! I feel the world  
grow old,  
And off Olympus fades the gold  
Of the simple passionate sun;  
And the Gods wither one by one:  
Proud-eyed Apollo's bow is broken,  
And throned Zeus nods nor may be woken  
But by the song of spirits seven  
Quiring in the midnight heaven  
Of a new world no more forlorn,  
Sith unto it a Babe is born,  
That in a propped, thatched stable lies,  
While with darkling, reverend eyes

Dusky Emperors, coifed in gold,  
Kneel mid the rushy mire, and hold  
Caskets of rubies, urns of myrrh,  
Whose fumes enwrap the thurifer  
And coil toward the high dim rafters  
Where, with lutes and warbling laughters,  
Clustered cherubs of rainbow feather,  
Fanning the fragrant air together,  
Flit in jubilant holy glee,  
And make heavenly minstrelsy  
To the Child their Sun, whose glow  
Bathes them His cloudlets from below. . . .  
Long shall this chimed accord be heard,  
Yet all earth hushed at His first word:  
Then shall be seen Apollo's car  
Blaze headlong like a banished star;  
And the Queen of heavenly Loves  
Dragged downward by her dying doves;  
Vulcan, spun on a wheel, shall track  
The circle of the zodiac;  
Silver Artemis be lost,  
To the polar blizzards tossed;  
Heaven shall curdle as with blood;  
The sun be swallowed in the flood;  
The universe be silent save  
For the low drone of winds that lave  
The shadowed great world's ashen sides  
As through the rustling void she glides.  
Then shall there be a whisper heard

Of the Grave's Secret and its Word,  
 Where in black silence none shall cry  
 Save those who, dead-affrighted, spy  
 How from the murmurous graveyards creep  
 The figures of eternal sleep.  
 Last: when 'tis light men shall behold,  
 Beyond the crags, a flower of gold  
 Blossoming in a golden haze,  
 And, while they guess Zeus' halls now blaze  
 Shall in the blossom's heart descry  
 The saints of a new hierarchy !"

He ceased . . . and in the morning sky  
 Zeus' anger threatened murmuringly.  
 I sped away. The lightning's sword  
 Stabbed on the forest. But the word  
 Abides with me. I feel its power  
 Most darkly in the twilit hour,  
 When Night's eternal shadow, cast  
 Over earth hushed and pale and vast,  
 Darkly foretells the soundless Night  
 In which this orb, so green, so bright,  
 Now spins, and which shall compass her  
 When on her rondure nought shall stir  
 But snow-whorls which the wind shall roll  
 From the Equator to the Pole. . . .

*Of the  
 Final  
 Nature of  
 Pan.* For everlastingly there is  
 Something Beyond, Behind: I wis

All Gods are haunted, and there clings,  
As hound behind fled sheep, the things  
Beyond the Universe's ken:  
Gods haunt the Half-Gods, Half-Gods men,  
And Man the brute. Gods, born of Night,  
Feel a blacker appetite  
Gape to devour them; Half-Gods dread  
But jealous Gods; and mere men tread  
Warily lest a Half-God rise  
And loose on them from empty skies  
Amazement, thunder, stark affright,  
Famine and sudden War's thick night,  
In which loud Furies hunt the Pities  
Through smoke above wrecked, flaming cities.

For Pan, the Unknown God, rules all.  
He shall outlive the funeral,  
Change, and decay, of many Gods,  
Until he, too, lets fall his rods  
Of viewless power upon that minute  
When Universe cowers at Infinite!

## XIX

So far my mind runs, yet I see  
How little faun-philosophy  
Repays my heart would learn, not teach. . . .  
Better laugh long, lie, suck a peach

Couched under tiger-lily flowers  
Which daze the low hot sun with showers  
Of fragrance, while the dusty bee  
Drones, fumbles, falls luxuriantly  
Within their throats; couched, turn a song  
Of flowers all the flowers among:

There is a vale beyond blue Ida's mount,  
And thither often would I, piping, stray  
To listen to the music of a fount  
That spelt her tears out in a Dorian lay.

THE  
FAUN'S  
AFTERNOON  
SONG.

"Long, long ago," she wept, "Narcissus came  
Wandering down the sunny-shafted glade;  
Full weary was he of the lamp's gold flame  
Wavering beneath the dusky colonnade.

"For at the fall of night forth from the dim  
Gardens stole Echo; kneeling by his bed,  
With small sweet love-words she importuned him  
Who watched the lamp flame idle overhead.

"Dry was her hot flushed cheek and dark the fire  
In her great eyes; her lips roamed warm and  
light  
Over his arm; her murmurs of desire  
Mixed with the many murmurs of the night.



“ In vain ! He came to rest and sing with me  
And loll his fingers in the liquid cool,  
And drop slow tears, slow tears luxuriously  
Into the shadowy motion of the pool.

“ With tongue scarce audible I wooed the lad,  
Whispering how beneath the drumming fall  
Slumbers a rapt, deep lake, so blue, so sad,  
That no fish swim it, nor about it call

“ Delighting birds from green-bowered shore to  
shore,  
Nor doth the nightingale, when June begins  
And the moon mounts a pattin of bright or,  
Hymn her long sorrows and her lord's black sins.

“ And the boy answered, answered me, and  
mourned  
The loveliness of Echo. ‘ Yet,’ sighed he,  
‘ My soul is fled, and long, thou knowest, bourned  
In what far dell none knoweth, love, but thee

“ ‘ Who farest thither ! Sweeter to my ears  
Are thy quiet voices and the gentle breast  
Of rambling water sweeter than my dear's.’  
Then murmured I, ‘ Lean lower, love, and rest.’

“ There was no sound through all the sleeping  
wood,

Save one sharp cry from Echo, open-lipped,  
Who, as she followed, from afar did spy  
How to my arms my lover downward slipped:

“ Softly I rocked him down into the pool,  
Shutting his ears to the loud torrents’ din,  
And kissed and bore him through the portals cool,  
And laid him sleeping the blue halls within.

“ So I returned; but never to me came  
Another as beautiful, nor shall come.  
Lonely I flow, and, flowing, lisp his name,  
Till the sky waste and all the earth be dumb.”

So sang the spring, and, answering my look,  
Through the dark wood from the spring’s  
fountain-head

Flock upon flock of eyed narcissi shook,  
And the brook wept in sorrow for the dead.

Ah, Death again ! nothing can fend  
Us from the Sibyl of the End,  
Whose delight ’tis to find new forms,  
Now in dull sighs, anon in storms,  
Singing, and ever of the same:  
The trusting heart betrayed; the flame

Whirled in a night on cities proud;  
Lightnings from skies undimmed by cloud;  
The wide grave yawned before swift feet;  
The small success that brings defeat;  
The smiling lips and deadly eyes  
Of Destiny walking in disguise.

## XX

*Of the  
Evening  
River.* But now the sun sinks I will go  
Whither two full streams meet and flow,  
Murmuring as in wedded sleep  
Through evening meadows dim and deep.  
There will I watch the slow trout rise  
At the myriad simmering flies,  
And listen to the water flowing  
With such faint sounds there is no knowing  
Whether its spirit laughs or weeps  
Among the dreams wherein it sleeps.

Sunken amid the twilight grass,  
I will watch the water pass,  
Weaving ever dimmer tales  
And dimmer as the evening pales. . . .  
Till from the calm the silent lark  
Drops to the meadows hushed and dark,  
While in the stagnant silver west,  
Above the tranquil poplars' crest,

There glimmers through the murky bar  
The slowly climbing Hesperal Star.

Thus brooding by the hazy stream,  
I shall hear the water dream  
Tinkily on, and I shall see,  
As my eyes close quietly.  
Into a soft and long repose,  
The lone star like a silver rose  
Fade with me on the drifting stream  
Into the quiet night of dream.

*Of  
Night's  
Rhapsodist.*

Yet sleep I not; for lo! there wakes  
From the dim water-meadow brakes  
A quiring: voice as if a star,  
Fallen to earth from midnight far  
Beyond the haze of highest cloud,  
Bewailed her errëd path aloud.  
It is the nightingale who sings,  
Fanning soft air with whirrëd wings,  
Probing the dark with jewelled eyes.  
How oft, how sad, how loud she cries!  
And all the echoes answer her;  
The night airs through the close wood stir  
The stars that through the eddies climb  
Glitter; the silver waters chime;  
The lily bows her dewy head. . . .

I, too, a sudden tear have shed.  
 For, ah ! what voice is this can make  
 'The vagrant heart within me ache ?  
 'That stirs an ancient tenderness,  
 A new need to console, love, bless  
 All things that 'neath this warm night sky  
 Rejoice and suffer, age and die ?  
 Hunger is in my heart like bliss,—  
 I stretch my arms out and I kiss,  
 Gathered in sad and sweet embrace,  
 The whole world's dark and simple face.

## XXI

*Of the  
Second  
Singer.* I wander forth. About my feet  
 The sward is fresh and doubly sweet  
 The loved air on my salvèd brow.  
 Be still. Be still. For hearken: now  
 A second voice behind the grove  
 Uprises tremulous with love.  
 How hushed, how moody is the strain !  
 Pleading—O, surely, not in vain !  
 Sombrely rises every note,  
 Lingers, and in dark dells remote  
 Echoes until another come.

Philomel herself falls dumb.

Philomel herself falls dumb,  
 Mindful of her shadowy home;

Of a slowly falling surge  
Sounding its unending dirge  
On an alien ocean's verge;  
Of a rain-smitten tower that stood  
Fronting the calm, pale rolling flood;  
Of a slim sister's beauty glows,  
Fatefuller than a midnight rose;  
Of the birth, growth, and scheming dire,  
Of an accurs'd King's desire;  
Of night-long vigil, tongueless wrack,  
And the last exultation black  
O'er loathly offering, feasting sour,  
A fell cry in the lonely tower,  
Raging pursuit, flight's vain endeavour,  
And Vengeance stilling all for ever.—  
Save the voice that nightly cries  
To the slowly wheeling skies  
Of unrest resolved in calm,  
Time's tears fallen like a balm,  
Sorrows that dead hearts have wrung,  
By the sad Enthusiast sung,  
Sweeter than Euphrosyne's tongue.

O tremulous voice ! who is 't that shakes  
The night with fervour ?

Through the brakes  
Softly I thread . . . emerge, and now  
Across the rising meadow's brow

I glimpse, beside the farther wood,  
Under the shadow of its hood,  
A glimmering shape that does not move.  
It is the shepherd and his love:  
Close, close they stand, swooning and dim;  
Her shadowed face looks up at him,  
Her sighing breath his forehead warms;  
He sings, she leans within his arms.

*The Shepherd.* Now arched dark boughs hang  
dim and still;  
The deep dew glistens up the hill;  
Silence trembles. All is still.

THE  
SHEPHERD'S  
NIGHT  
SONG.

Now the sweet siren of the woods,  
Philomel, passionately broods,  
Or, darkling, hymns love's wildest moods.

Danaë, fainting in her tower,  
Feels a sudden sun swim lower,  
Gasps beneath the starry shower.

Venus in the pomegranate grove  
Flutters like a fluttering dove  
Under young Adonis' love.

Leda longs until alight  
In the reeds those wings of white  
She hears beat the upper night.

Golden now the glowing moon,  
Diana over Endymion  
Downward bends as in a swoon.

Wherefore, since the gods agree,  
Youth is sweet and Night is free,  
And Love pleasure, should not we ?

*The  
Faun is  
struck  
with  
Sorrow.* Song whose desire her kisses bless !  
Song that wreaks wounds no lips redress,  
O wounding song ! Such loneliness  
Falls, like a stun blow from behind,  
That my hands grope, my eyes go blind.  
I gasp. . . .

Away, Away, O heart !  
Lone, wretched Faun, depart, depart ;  
Hide thyself, wretched, utterly,  
Climb to the clouds where none may see  
And mock thy causeless misery !

What joy is mine ? what is 't I have :  
Immortal life ? would 'twere a grave.  
Thus, thus to suffer world-without-end,  
No love, no hope, no goal, no friend !

And the proud, morning Centaur, how  
Fares he ? what lot doth Fate allow ?—  
More wretched yet ! to live and be  
Perfection's lone epitome.



To feel in him a fecund power,  
 And lack on which to spend that dower ! . . .  
 I mind me now that once I heard  
 Wise, gentle Pan pronounce this word :  
*"Whoever like a God would shine  
 Must share the loneliness divine."*  
 Ah ! to be Gods, then, is to be  
 One fierce eternal agony.  
 Yet, being Gods, such feel no pain ;  
 Their strength is equal to their bane.  
 While I, poor half-god and half-beast,  
 I would be man, the last and least  
 Of men !

O reasoning vain :

Were I but man and one in pain,  
 I could not by my utmost wipe  
 One tear away. But now this pipe  
 Hangs from my neck, god Pan's elect  
 Gift to his children to perfect  
 In awe, joy, grief, and loneliness.  
 Sound, pipe, and with thy note express  
 All this my heart ! to thee I give  
 All the long days that I must live.

I wander on, I fade in mist,  
 O peopled World, and dost<sup>est</sup> thou list ?  
 Pipe on, difficult pipes of mine ;  
 There is something in me divine,

And it must out. For this was I  
Born, and I know I cannot die  
Until, perfected pipe, thou send  
My utmost: God, which is

THE END.

BOOK III  
POEMS AND  
PHANTASIES

To  
MR. AND MRS. MOISEIWITSCH

## A TRIPTYCH

I.—FIRST PANEL: THE HILL

ON a day in Maytime mild  
Mary sat on a hill-top with her child.  
(Overhead in the calm sky's arching  
The curled white clouds went slowly marching. . . .  
But underneath the blue abyss  
All was stiller than water is  
Leagues under the surface of the sea.)  
And all about her thick and free  
Blossomed the dear familiar flowers.  
There, while her boy played through the hours,  
And the high sun shook gold upon her,  
Mary plaited a garland in his honour  
Who should be the King of Kings;  
And when 'tis done this song she sings,  
As Jesus, tired and happy, rests  
Curled in the hollow of her breasts:

“ In the shadow of my dress,  
    Out of the sun  
And his fierce caress,  
    Sleep, my son.

“ Soft the air about the hill,  
Scented, sunny, clear, and still;  
Below in the woods the daffodil  
Nods, and the shy anemone  
Creeps up from the thicket to look on thee,  
And ten thousand daisies meet  
In an ocean of stars about thy feet.

“ Daisies have I strung for thee,  
    Darling boy,  
Wee white blossoms that shall be  
    Dappled, ah ! so rosily  
    With thy blood,  
When they nail thee to the wood  
Cleft from out the crooked tree.  
    Can it be,  
Daisies innocent and good,  
That ye star black Calvary ?

“ Buttercups I make thy crown,  
    Darling boy.  
    (Lullaby, O lullaby !)  
Son of sorrow, son of joy,  
Pain and Paradise thou art,  
Thou that sighest nestling down  
In my breast, over my heart  
    That is a lake  
Where the hidden tear-drops ache

To be free,  
Till mounting upward for thy sake  
    Out they break,  
Down they plash on me and thee.

“ And Heaven in her charity  
Drops seven tears on me and thee.

“ This thy little childhood’s crown,  
    Flower on flower,  
Wear thou in thy lullaby  
Till thou facest the soldiers’ frown  
    In thine iron hour,  
Till the thorn they crown thee by  
    They press down:  
Ah, the sharp points in my heart !  
Ah, the sword, the sudden smart  
Flaying me as ’twere a flame !  
Crowned indeed, my son, thou art  
With red flowers of pain and shame !

“ Birds and butterflies and trees,  
And the long hush of the breeze  
Shimmering over the silken grass,  
What wouldst thou have more than these ? . .  
In the stall the ox and ass  
Gazed on thee with tender eyes;  
All things love thee; yet there lies



Some hid thing in thee breeds fear—  
Brims not falls thy mother's tear.  
Wherefore, baby, must thou go ?  
Rose, to be torn in sunder so ?  
Little bonny limbs, little bonny face,  
My lamb, my torment, my disgrace !

“ O baby, are thine eyelids closed  
Faster than my eyes supposed ?  
With foxes must thy bed be maken,  
A beggar with beggars must thou go,  
To be at last forsworn, forsaken ?  
And bear alone thy cross also  
Anigh to the foot of a bare hill ?  
To hang gibbeted and abhorred,  
For passers-by to wish thee ill ?  
And to thrust against thy will  
Through thy mother's bosom the sharpest sword ?

“ O baby, breathing so quietly,  
Have thou mercy upon me !

That in thy madness  
On thy lonely journey farest,  
That understandest not nor carest

For me and my sadness !  
Woe indeed ! thou dost not know  
Man cometh into this world in sorrow  
To spend in grief to-night, to-morrow  
In sorrow the third day to go !

“ O sleep, dear baby, and, heart, sleep;  
Turn to thy slumber, golden, deep,  
Of present possible happiness.  
Let drop the daisies one by one  
Over his body and his dress;  
Afflicted eyes, see but thy son  
Who sleeps secure from hurt, from harm,  
Clasped to my breast, closed in my arm,  
Who murmurs as the flowers by the faint wind  
    shaken,  
And, putting forth sweet, sleepy hands,  
Feels for the kisses he demands. . . .  
Slowly, belov'd, dost thou awaken,  
And sure, in heaven there is no sign:  
It is not true that thou shalt be taken,  
Who for ever, for ever art mine, art mine !”

Into the west the calm white sun  
Floated and sank. The day was done.  
Mary returned, and as she went,  
Above her, in the firmament,  
'The stars, that are the flowers of God,  
Mirrored the flowery earth she trod.  
Thus bore she on her destined child,  
And while she wept, behold ! he smiled,

And stretched his arms seeking a kiss. . . .  
Softly she kissed him, and a bliss,  
Deeper than all her human tears,  
Flooded her and put out her fears.

OXFORD.  
*Early Spring, 1914.*

I.—SECOND AND CENTRE PANEL: THE TOWER

It was deep night, and over Jerusalem's low roofs  
The moon floated, drifting through high vaporous  
woofs.

The moonlight crept and glistened silent, solemn,  
sweet,

Over dome and column, up empty, endless street;  
In the closed, scented gardens the rose loosed from  
the stem

Her white showery petals; none regarded them;  
The starry thicket breathed odours to the sen-  
tinel palm;

Silence possessed the city like a soul possessed by  
calm.

Not a spark in the warren under the giant night,  
Save where in a turret's lantern beamed a grave,  
still light:

There in the topmost chamber a gold-eyed lamp  
was lit—

Marvellous lamp in darkness, informing, redeem-  
ing it!

For, set in that tiny chamber, Jesus, the blessed  
and doomed,  
Spoke to the lone apostles as light to men en-  
tombèd;  
And spreading his hands in blessing, as one soon  
to be dead,  
He put soft enchantment into spare wine and  
bread.

The hearts of the disciples were broken and full  
of tears,  
Because their lord, the spearless, was hedgèd  
about with spears;  
And in his face the sickness of departure had  
spread a gloom,  
At leaving his young friends friendless.

They could not forget the tomb.  
He smiled subduedly, telling, in tones soft as  
voice of the dove,  
The endlessness of sorrow, the eternal solace of  
love;  
And lifting the earthly tokens, wine and sorrowful  
bread,  
He bade them sup and remember one who lived  
and was dead.

And they could not restrain their weeping.  
But one rose up to depart,  
Having weakness and hate of weakness raging  
within his heart,

And bowed to the robed assembly whose eyes  
gleamed wet in the light.

Judas arose and departed: night went out to the  
night.

Then Jesus lifted his voice like a fountain in an  
ocean of tears,

And comforted his disciples and calmed and  
allayed their fears.

But Judas wound down the turret, creeping from  
floor to floor,

And would fly; but one leaning, weeping, barred  
him beside the door.

And he knew her by her ruddy garment and two  
yet-watching men:

Mary of Seven Evils, Mary Magdalen.

And he was frightened at her. She sighed: "I  
dreamed him dead.

We sell the body for silver. . . ."

Then Judas cried out and fled  
Forth into the night! . . . The moon had begun  
to set;

A drear, deft wind went sifting, setting the dust  
afret;

Into the heart of the city Judas ran on and prayed  
To stern Jehovah lest his deed make him afraid.

But in the tiny lantern, hanging as if on air,  
The disciples sat unspeaking. Amaze and peace  
were there.

For *his* voice, more lovely than song of all earthly  
birds,  
In accents humble and happy spoke slow, con-  
soling words.

Thus Jesus discoursed, and was silent, sitting  
upright, and soon  
Past the casement behind him slanted the sink-  
ing moon;  
And, rising for Olivet, all stared, between love and  
dread,  
Seeing the torrid moon a ruddy halo behind his  
head.

GRAYSHOTT,  
*July, 1914.*

### III.—THIRD PANEL: THE TREE

THE crookēd tree creaked as its loaded bough  
dipped

And suddenly jerked up. The rope had slipped,  
And hideously Judas fell, and all the grass  
Was soused and reddened where he was,  
And the tree creaked its mirth. . . .

Mid the hot sky  
Appeared immediate dots tiny and high,  
Till downward wound in batlike herds  
Black, monstrous, gawky birds,  
And, narrowing their rustling rings,  
Alit, talons foremost. And with flat wings  
Flapped in the branches, and glared, and croaked  
and croaked,

While no compassionate human came and cloaked  
The thing that stared up at the giddy day  
With pale blue eyeballs and wry-lipped display  
Of yellow teeth closed on the blue, bit tongue.  
Overhead the light in silence hung,



And fiercely showed the sweaty, knotted hands  
Clutching the rope about the swollen glands. . . .  
And the birds croaked and croaked, evilly eyeing  
The thing so lying,  
Which no commiserate pity came and cloaked,  
But which soaked  
The earth, so that the flies  
Dizzily swung over its winkless eyes,  
And in a crawling, shiny, busy brood  
Blackened the sticky blood,  
And tickled the tongue-choked mouth that sought  
to cry  
Bitterly and beseechingly  
Against the judgment of th' unflinching sky.

The poor dead, lonely thing had not a shroud  
From that still, frightful glare until a cloud  
Of darkness, flowing like a dye  
Over the edges of the sky,  
Browened and put out the silent sun:  
A benison  
Of three hours' space.  
And it had power  
To put a shadow into that thing's face,  
And th' invisible birds fell silent by its grace.

Thus Judas lay in shadow and all was still. . . .

Then faint light, like water, began again to fill  
The sky, and a whisper—came it from the grass,  
Whispering dry and sparse,  
Or from the air beyond the neighbouring hill?—  
Ebbbed, as a spirit on a sigh  
Passing beyond alarm:  
“*It is finished!*”  
And there was calm  
Under the empty tree and in the brightening sky.

GRAYSHOTT,  
*July, 1914.*

FOUR SONGS FROM  
“THE PRINCE OF  
ORMUZ”

I.—THE PRINCE OF ORMUZ SINGS TO  
BADOURA

WHEN she kisses me with her lips, I become  
A Roc, that giant, that fabulous bird  
And over the desert, vast, yellow, and dumb,  
I wheel, and my jubilant screaming is heard,  
A voice, an echo, high up and glad,  
Over the domes and green pools of Bagdad.

But when she kisses me with her eyes,  
My heart melts in me; she is my sun;  
She strokes my snow; I am loosed, I arise:  
A brook of water I run, I run,  
Crystal water, sunny and sweet,  
Laughing and weeping to fawn at her feet.

LAWFORD,  
*Easter, 1914.*

## II.—THE SONG OF THE PRINCESS BESIDE THE FOUNTAIN

MY rose, or ever the three tears were shed  
I wished lie in its bosom, has fallen apart;  
Off their knapped golden hair all my pure pearls  
have sped  
Before their mid-ruby could burn on my heart.  
To-day is as yesterday; as to-day so to-morrow;  
But fallen my rose, pearls, tears,  
Fallen in sorrow.  
Or ever I woke it was sunset to-day;  
As fast flows the fountain, as fast flows away,  
As fast fall away  
My rose and my tears, my pearls and my sorrow.

IN HOSPITAL,  
*January, 1916*

### III.—THE SONG OF THE PRINCE IN DISGUISE

THE look in thine eyes can change me utterly;  
Thine eyes challenge: my heart is lighted,  
I am thy taper, I burn straight-pointed—  
Ay, even so doing I waste away.

Bathe me in thy calm eyes' soft glances;  
I am thy slave, I bow, I worship;  
Bid me to steal, and I will steal gladly:  
Ah! bid me not, thou robbest my manhood.

Let thine eyes smile: change comes upon me,  
I put forth blossoms, flowers of my passion,  
Roses crimson, alas! whose petals,  
Once white, now blush with blood of my heart.

Gaze not on me: I burn, I perish;  
Gaze not on me: I am thy servant;  
Gaze not on me: I sink a-bleeding;  
Yet gaze! I cannot otherwise live.

LAWFORD,  
*Easter, 1914.*

IV.—THE PRINCESS BADOURA'S LAST SONG TO  
HER LOVER

I HAVE poured my wine into a gold cup,  
I have plucked my roses, unfastened the stone  
From my bosom. Thou mayest drink my red  
wine up,  
Or spill where my jewel and roses are thrown.

The golden-globed night deepens quickly over  
Me, afraid under its curtains. The spheres  
Stare. O gather me swiftly, my lover;  
Make me forget and forgive me these tears.

LAWFORD,  
*Easter, 1914.*





THE GIFT OF SONG

## THE GIFT OF SONG

BEYOND a hill and a river,  
Within a tower of stone,  
A Princess by a casement  
Dreamed, sitting still, alone.

Her golden hair hung heavy  
Over her kirtle green;  
Her eyes were blue and lonely,  
Her tender mouth had been

A joy for splendid kisses,  
It was so red, so red;  
But it was parted in singing,  
And, beginning her song, she said:

“ Three songs in my spirit:  
Elusive, tremulous, light.  
If you can feel their tremor,  
This gift is spendèd aright.”

Without in the silent garden  
The sunflowers dozed in the sun,  
Bees blackened their tawny faces,  
Their heads drooped one by one.

Amid a stilly fig-tree,  
Hidden from sun and sight,  
A nightingale sang over  
The songs that rejoice the night.

And browsing upon sweet grasses  
In the fair solitude,  
Half in sun, half in shadow,  
A lordly bay stag stood.

Upon earth all was silent  
Save when the hid bird sung;  
In the dark blue afternoon heavens  
A silent half-moon hung.

. . . . .

As she commenced singing,  
The nightingale stopped. In the dead  
Silence the leaves flicked softly;  
The great stag turned his head.

. . . . .

Thus sung she alone, and only  
The stag, the fig-tree, the bird  
And pensive moon in the darkling heavens  
Her lovely singing heard.

And as she finished singing,  
She bowed her golden head  
Low, O low, on her shaking bosom.  
And, ending her song, she said:

“ Three songs in my spirit:  
Elusive, tremulous, light.  
You have felt their tremor;  
This gift is spendèd aright.”

The nightingale lifted her voice up,  
The moon fled out of the skies,  
The fig-tree split, and two tears rolled  
Out of the great stag's eyes.

Now, when she had done singing,  
She closed her eyes, and her breath  
Went out as she lay down backward  
And folded her hands in death.

LYME REGIS,  
*July 6, 1916.*

FRAGMENTS FROM A  
DRAMA ON THE SUBJECT  
OF ORESTES

## I.—WARNING UNHEEDED

*Kassandra.* I cried in the halls where the feast will be set;  
The hurrying servants whom I met  
Brushed me aside, asked why I tarried.  
On their black woolly heads gold platters they  
carried,  
Piled high with rich fruits; betwixt jewelled  
hands,  
Goblets of crystal, white blossoming wands,  
Urns breathing incense: all these to be set  
Where 'Truth's feast and the feasters too soon  
shall be met.

The guest shall turn as he laughs and sups,  
Reaching his hand for the golden wine;  
His face shall change as he sees next to him  
A mouth that mocks, eyes that look through him,  
A head sink her glistening brow 'twixt the cups,  
Locks blackening his stoup with a liquor of brine.

In the scrolls of the platter of gold there has bled  
The juice of fruit battered and hairy and red;

The goblets of crystal are fissured and cracked  
Like ice the bronze tyre of the chariot has wracked,  
And the blossoms curl withered because of the  
heat

Of urns overset by the slip of red feet  
When the reveller fell forward unable to save  
His eyes from the torch, his groin from the  
glaive.

*Chorus.* For Truth rejected returns as Pain.

*Cassandra.* Under the trestles the guests lie slain;  
The curtains upon the gold cords pull  
Heavily, sagging like nets that are full,  
For curved in the trough and propped in the  
fold

The red, red catch lies tossed and rolled;  
The halls and corridors reek with the flood;  
The pillars are trickled with cyphers of blood;  
Rent garlands lie trampled over the floors;  
Rusty footprints lead out through the high bronze  
doors

To the starlit night and the whispering plain:

*Chorus.* For Truth rejected returns as Pain.

*Cassandra.* I weep for the ruin of a high, proud house;  
Moths fret the still curtains; down the throne  
runs a mouse;

The sun fades on the floors heaped high with  
dead leaves;  
The moon runs on the rills that run from the  
eaves;  
Brown clogs the peristyle; the air has a tang;  
Weeds rot on the terrace; the hanging gates clang;  
The wind is a weariness; man lives in vain

*Chorus.* Where Truth rejected returns as Pain.

1914-1916.



## II.—ORESTES TO THE FURIES

YE are no madman's dreams, then ! . . .

Out sword ! Backward tread  
O curs that circle the bright blade ye dread.

Back to where dead-eyed Hate, your shameful  
priest,

Prepares your bowl of blood, your fleshy feast :  
Where in the thronged and long-hushed market-  
place

Ten thousand faces gaze on one pale face ;

Where the lost victim feels the lonely ban

Of death terrific loosed by man on man ;

Where black blood froths, where drives the  
whirring wheel ;

Where hands, ears, lips fall lopped of instant  
steel ;

Where the intent and dazzling pincher plies

Till to the silent torturers Anguish cries

At once for death ! and when sharp death is given,

Others, corded and swooned, antic and sick, are  
driven

Under the axe, whose sheeny flash and fall  
Bids the block ring as pile beneath the maul,  
Till Man's protest dies to a whisper, dumb  
Beneath the maddened rolling of Death's drum!

1915.

## BLACK SONG

I.—AT BRAYDON

DAY wanes slowly;  
On the hill no sound  
Save the wind uttering  
Chords low . . . few . . . profound.

How the west smokes and quivers !  
It sears, it blinds my sight;  
I am burned out wholly,  
Hide me from the light.

Within dear arms yoke me,  
Gather me. I am sped  
Into your little bosom  
Press, hide my childish head.

How long I have struggled  
I know not; but the past  
Seems twice livelong,  
Beaten at the last !

My soul leaps and shudders  
In pain none understands;  
With your clear voice calm it,  
Soothe it with your hands.

I can say only  
—So lost am I, so distressed—  
“I love you: I am tired.”  
You must guess the rest.

I love you: I am tired.  
I give you my soul,  
It hurts me. Hate has lamed it.  
Take it; make it whole.

*Late Summer, 1916.*

## II.—MIDDAY ON THE EDGE OF THE DOWNS

STILLNESS falls and a glare.  
The woods in darkness lie.  
The fields are stretched and stare  
Under the empty sky.  
Vacant the ways of the air,  
Along which no birds fly.  
Only the high sun's flare  
Spills on the empty sky.

I lift my aching eyes  
From the dry wilderness:  
Across me a peewit flies  
With gestures meaningless. . . .  
Mine are his piping cries  
At this world's emptiness !

1913.

### III.—IN DORSETSHIRE

COLD and bare the sunlight  
Drifted across the hill,  
Round which the sea wind's current  
Unfathomable and chill,  
From dawn to silver sunset  
Poured now faint, now shrill.

“How to comfort you,  
Share any part?  
Even to understand you  
Too deep an art!  
Yet I'd comfort you,  
Tear out my heart.”

“Do not look on me,  
Dry eyes for my sake;  
Do not smooth my forehead  
Your hands make me ache;  
O, and turn away your kisses  
Or heart must break.”

Cold and bare the sunlight  
Drifted across the hill,  
Only the sea-wind's current,  
Unfathomable and chill,  
Heard such speech gather,  
Bewail itself . . . fall still.

Toward the hill then zigzagged  
One wind-harried plover—  
Rocked for a moment . . .  
Cried to love and lover  
The top of loneliness  
Ere he heeled over.



MAN'S ANACREONTIC  
AND OTHER POEMS

## MAN'S ANACREONTIC

Kiss ! Kiss me and kiss again,  
Make kissing almost pain;  
Close your fingers close on mine,  
And our grappling looks entwine;  
Kiss again, and when that's done  
Blind me with each facing sun  
Of your clear and golden eyes,  
Till my spirit in me dies,  
And endures a long eclipse  
Till rekindled at your lips.

From this minute I pursue  
The intense Idea that's you—  
Your you's Being. I would draw  
You from Obscurity's dusk maw  
Into my hands—whate'er you are,  
Moth or spirit, gnome or star.  
Yet I would not filch a part,  
Misty soul or flaming heart,  
Which left but, as doth the snake,  
A pale tissue. I will take

And shut all your sweetness up  
In the gold walls of a cup,  
Sandalled feet to sweeping hair,  
Soul, brain, body, all you are—  
Curled as a mermaid coiled in brine,  
Now drunk one gush of giddy wine !

Nay, as a strange lump of snow  
In my two hands you shall go,  
And I'll bare my brownny breast,  
Press you there, where now you rest !  
Ay, and bless the frozen smart  
As you melt into my heart !

Come, I'll twine you round my brows :  
A defiant diadem,  
Poets of your light shall sing.  
Satraps by you swear stout vows  
Eyeing my twice-marvellous gem—  
You: the emerald in my ring.

Thus I'll keep you night and day,  
Since no stone can run away—  
And might dare a pleasure splendid :  
Toss my ring into the air,  
Watch it spinning, heart suspended,  
Lest it slip me unaware,  
Fall clean through my finger bars,  
Shatter in ten thousand stars !

Yet you shall not be my ring  
You shall not be any thing,  
Crown or stone set cunningly  
Time can separate from me.

No ! I'll find an alchemist,  
With a beard of cobwebs grey  
And fired eyes like moonstones kissed  
By the last gold beam of day,  
And older and gentler than a fish,  
And wiser than an elephant;  
And when I've told him what we wish,  
Bribe or force him work our want.

We two shall opposèd stand,  
Each touch other's finger-tip;  
At a slow pass of his hand  
And a soft word from his lip,  
We will incline smilingly,  
And as drops together run,  
Shaking off the he and she,  
Close and be for ever one.

GRAYSHOTT,  
*Summer, 1914.*

## THE BLACKBIRD

I STAND in a sunny garden;  
A blackbird sings overhead:  
“I’m alive . . . I’ve a love . . . the sun’s shining  
And where’s the man would be dead ?”

“Blackbird, make an ending of fluting  
That song down your orange beak:  
I’m alive . . . I’ve a love . . . the sun’s shining,  
And—I am the man you seek.”

STAMFORD,  
*May, 1913.*

## CHANGE

BEHOLD, the tides are awake !  
Under the high moon's light,  
Broad bands of silver, they glitter and quake,  
Moving out into the night.

Off from the shore they slide,  
Out, out into the blue :  
And I am turned to a shimmering tide  
Flooding on outward to you !

HENGISTBURY HEAD,  
*Spring, 1915.*

## TRANSFIGURATION

Two feet apart, straight-limbed on the heathered  
hill

We lie, under the wavering haze  
Of the sun, even as two logs that lie still  
In the heart of a blaze.

Side by side we lie through the long  
Late noon together;  
On us the light wind stoops his strong,  
Hot, sweet scents of heather.

No word breaks the air that smothers,  
Lest we miss  
The dull heart-beat of the earth below each  
other's,

And the soft kiss  
Of breathless heather upon heather, while the  
sun

Beats on us encouraging the swiftening blood,  
Till up the limbs and through the ears it run,  
A thin, red singing flood.

Love hath put in me might,  
That was so weak;  
I am strong with light,  
My senses seek

Something indefinable, afar;  
They go wandering, and return . . .  
With the light drunk off a star  
They calmly burn,  
Even as the immense sun burns on us  
Till evening turns watery those beams of his;  
And, rising from that joyance onerous,  
I stoop a kiss  
Lighter than the balls of fluff  
The wind sways across the heath,  
Though each invisible, hot puff  
Scarce rocks a spray beneath.

I sit, and it is so still,  
Now wind and sun have gone home,  
I can almost hear distil  
The dew in the gloam.  
And from the clear and cool  
Of the twilit air,  
That is still as a pool  
Iced over and bare,  
I catch at length  
The thought I have been searching for:  
Did I absorb the sun's or just your strength,  
Or Something More ?

*Summer, 1914.*



## PLAINT OF PIERROT ILL-USED

I AM Pierrot, and was born  
On some February morn  
When through glistening rain shone down  
The full moon on Paris town.  
(Ah the moonshine in my head !)

For, upon the fatal minute  
When the moon's heart changes in it  
And the tides their flow reverse,  
I, for better or for worse,  
Born was. (Better been born dead  
Than with moonwork in my head !)

Clown stood foster, but another  
Got me of Clown's wife my mother,  
And as suited my poor station,  
Thieving was made my profession:  
Doorsteps often were my bed  
(Frosty moonshine in my head).

Yet while Pierrot was a thief—  
Miracle beyond belief,  
Chance fantastic as divine!—  
I fell in with Columbine:  
Dark eyes, lips of mournful red  
(Dark-bright moonshine in my head).

At the corner of the street  
She and I by night would meet;  
Met, but never told our love,  
While th' ironic moon above  
In her reverie smiled, and shed  
Tranquil radiance round each head.

Till my father by a breath  
Stifled at the hands of Death,  
“—Since no other children were—  
Assigned me as only heir.”  
(Silver sequins heaped and spread:  
Billowing silver in my head.)

So, in search of fitting knowledge,  
Poor Pierrot was sent to college,  
Where Pantaloon and Pantaloon  
In answerless riddles o' the moon  
Crammed more moonshine in his head.

Home, then, Pierrot by-and-by  
Hurried spent, resolved to sigh

Headache, heartache, and the rest,  
Out on Columbine's white breast,  
White as the moon's cloudy bed  
(Hush the moonshine in my head).

But, while gone, had entered in  
Spangled, smiling Harlequin;  
Laughter cynic and unholy:  
“Pah! Pierrot's poor melancholy!”  
Turned but not a word I said  
(Moons like swords within my head!)

Forth: but money burns so bright!  
Let it burn, then, left and right:  
“Where, O where, is Punchinello?  
Scaramouch too, that gay fellow?  
A brisk life it is we'll lead:  
Drown the moonshine in my head!”

Midnight: Venus by an urn,  
Roses and rose lanterns burn,  
Wine, fount's purl, and mandoline. . . .  
Pulcinella waits within,  
Faithless she—but in her bed:  
No more moonlight in my head!

Ah! . . .

yet dawns a dreary morrow:  
‘Spend at ease, and owe in sorrow,’

With light purse to her begone,  
If but as a hanger-on !  
(Dread and moonlight in my head.

Home then: catch upon the way—  
'Harlequin fled yesterday.  
Bankruptcy of his employ.'  
Surging of relief and joy:  
Welcome then ? past words unsaid ?  
Surge of moonlight through my head.

So on, beating, to her street:  
What sight Pierrot's eyes doth greet ?  
One coach at her door arrives,  
From the back another drives. . . .  
Strange ! (mere moonlight in the head).

Pull the bell: is she within ?  
'I must see Miss Columbine.'  
Maid with finger laid by nose,  
Better not inquire too close—  
*Such puts bullets through the head !*

Now I wander back and forth;  
Pierrot goes east, south, west, north;  
Shakes his head and shrugs his shoulders.  
Till the more acute beholders,  
Watching him, have hazarded,—  
'Touch of something in the head ?'

I am Pierrot, and was born  
On some far forgotten morn  
When the cold moon on the pane  
Struck and, signless, 'gan to wane,  
When the tides their flow reversed;  
And I bear, uncured, accursed,  
Aching until I am dead,  
Moonlight, moonlight in my head!

DEVONSHIRE,  
*November, 1916,*

GIRL'S SONG FROM "THE TAILOR"\*

O SILVER bird, fly down, fly down,  
Bring thy fair gifts to him and me:  
A purse contains a minted crown,  
A golden ring for me.  
Ah! lovely bird, fly down, fly down.

But upon the highest bough  
See amid the leaves he swings,  
Pipes three notes of laughter low,  
Flirts, and folds his flashy wings.  
Ah! lovely bird, fly down, fly down.

What is't, bird, thy soul demands?  
Come, I'll rock thee in my breast;  
I will stroke thee with my hands;  
Where none rested thou shalt rest. . . .  
Ah! lovely bird, fly down, fly down.

\* "The Tailor," opera-buffa in three acts, being Op. 10 of Bernard van Dieren.

Jewels wouldst thou, then, O bird ?  
See, among the sunny grass  
A tear has fallen unseen, unheard,  
Brighter than ever diamond was.

Hark! Hark! His joy my voice doth drown:  
See, see, he leaps, floats, dives him down !

1916.

LAST SONG IN AN OPERA

FROM the apple bough many petals fly tossed  
of the wind,

Yet goldenly heavy it hangs on blue autumn eves  
(*All things come unto him whose heart believes*).

The dove, though the tempest-swept sun her  
bright eyes blind,

Beats onward fast.

Till with clapped, sailing wings down at the last  
To the loved cote she come.

*Ah, the long way of Love, but Love comes home !*

The silver river wanders and circles time out of  
mind,

Yet turns at length where the sea tosses her  
smoking sheaves

(*All things come unto him whose heart believes*).

So golden-feathered Love beats his high course,  
though blind,

Until that hour

When, downward stooping through the flaming  
shower,

Into the heart he come.

*Ah, the long way of Love, but Love comes home !*



DANAË

MYSTERY IN EIGHT POEMS

DANAË: MYSTERY IN EIGHT POEMS

I

“WHAT with clangour, clangour of iron din,  
Do they beat till daylight ring ?  
What heat, that I see the night air spin,  
And sparks dance over the scaffolding ?

“The birds have flown because of their strife  
Hammering difficult metal;  
Their reek has taken my roses’ life,  
Dripping white petal on petal.

“What glows gold taller than earthly tree  
In that maze of mast on mast  
Of the scaffolding ? What can it be  
They build so secret and fast ?”

II

“What art mooning at, fool ?  
Some wanton boy and his limbs ?  
Such dreams should be put to school:  
I’ll chasten these fleshly whims !”

He has shot the bolts on her room  
In the brazen tower.

'Remain there, ninny: your doom  
Till the sand sifts your last hour!'

With eyes grieving on space,  
Has she sight among all these blind?  
Because of her dreaming face. . . .  
How harshly the great keys grind!

They have gone. She clenches her hands,  
She struggles and makes soft moan. . . .  
Then smiles, for she understands:  
The soul is never alone.

### III

"Last night as I was sitting,  
My faint heart ceased to beat,  
Listening in the silence  
To the tread of nearing feet.

"Through the tower dumb in midnight  
They passed from floor to floor,  
Till at length they halted  
Hard without my door.

"I knew 'twas Thou who stood'st there,  
With but a door's divide!  
With a wild and longing motion  
I strode and flung it wide.

“ Out into velvet darkness  
My whirring eyeballs stare.  
I whisper. Nothing answers.  
And there is no one there.”

#### IV

##### CANTICLE

“ O Day so bright,  
Bring thou my Love to me,  
In blinding, deep delight  
And ecstasy.

“ O Night so wide,  
So black, keep close till He,  
The light within my side  
Seen, comes to me.

“ O wandering Wind,  
Sing in His ears the sum  
Of longing, mad His mind,  
Compel He come.

“ Earth I adore,  
From whom to whom I go,  
Bring Him to me before  
I return so.

“ Sun, nought doth let  
In journey or depart;  
Make Him, arisen, set  
Within my heart.

“ O high white Moon,  
Alone and glittering,  
As you pull ocean soon,  
My Belovèd bring.

“ O swelling Sea,  
Cavernous in your sweep,  
Make Him ingulph, drown me  
Far in His deep.

“ O Day, O Night,  
O Moon, O Sun, O Sea,  
O Wind, bring my Delight !  
Bring Him to me !”

## V

In the second watch of the night  
The amazed guards saw with affright  
Gold stars fall in a shower:  
Coins of gold in a sweeping flight,  
They silently broke on the tower.

And the tower's top turned a rose  
Of enwreathed, ruddy light,  
And, like men smit of their foes,  
The guards fell at the sight. . . .

And the Rose possessed the tower alone  
All the blue, windless night.

## VI

"Soft torrential wind  
Falls through the vast, still deep  
Like thick dreams pouring behind  
The opened gates of sleep:  
*Ah, not so swift, Lord, not so bright,  
Lest I be blown—a feather;  
Not so white, not so white,  
Lest I be withered altogether.*

"Earth shifts under my feet,  
Glory breaks over my head;  
Speechlessly my wings I beat,  
And fall mute in breathless dread:  
*Ah, not so swift, Lord, not so bright,  
Lest I be blown—a feather;  
Not so white, not so white,  
Lest I be wilted altogether."*

## VII

“ Mine is a heavenly Lover,  
In Him I am wholly blest;  
My heart it is His coffer  
Wherein His gold doth rest.

“ Dead in the metal tower  
I lie till night doth come,  
When in a golden shower  
He bursts the midnight dome;

“ And, caught beyond releasing,  
I yield me to His claim,  
And by my creature ceasing  
All that He is I am.”

## VIII

The silver sun looks down  
On the silent tower;  
The guards awaken, nor own  
To the unguarded hour.

They eye each other's face,  
But to speak none durst;  
As though the night were ungraced,  
Silent they are dispersed.

The cruel King climbs, doth draw  
Near, then by he creeps,  
Marking in rage and awe  
The smile in which she sleeps.

STAMFORD,  
*Autumn, 1912, and Autumn, 1913.*



## THE ECSTASY

I LAY upon a headland hill:  
The sun spilt out his gold;  
The wind blew with a fluttering thrill;  
The skies were blue and cold.

All day above the little cove  
I heard the long wind flow;  
The clouds foamed in the blue above,  
The blue sea foamed below.

All day the bare sun fiercely burned;  
All day in the profound  
And quivering grass my body turned,  
One with Earth's turning round.

Till, fledged amid her fluid rings,  
My soul began to rouse,  
And slowly beat her silver wings  
Within her darkened house.

Then with vans lifted up for flight,  
With stretched and fiery crest,  
Upward she leaped toward the light  
And drew from out my breast.

How long I lay while she was fled,  
And on the cliff below  
My body lay stiff, dark, and dead,  
I knew not nor may know.

But long it seemed. Sped beyond sight  
My soul enjoyed release;  
Beyond the clouds, within the light,  
She entered into peace.

. . . . .

To-day, amid a world of men,  
How often must I cry:  
“Happy I never was but then  
Nor shall be till I die!”

NEAR GOLD CAP,  
*Late Summer, 1916.*

### THE WATER-LILY

THE Lily floated white and red,  
Pouring its scent up to the sun;  
The rapt sun floating overhead  
Watched no such other one.

None marked it as it spread abroad  
And beautifully learned to cease:  
But Beauty is its own reward,  
Being a form of Peace.

1913.

DEEM YOU THE ROSES . .

DEEM you the roses taste no pleasure  
Unfolding hour by hour  
Toward, through starlit peace and sunny leisure,  
Their sharpest moment, when they dower  
This great green world, this rustling place,  
Active in music, light, and grace,  
With their hid hearts, their golden treasure,  
Odours so deep they overpower ?

See how, hazed in the sunny weather,  
The silken roses swim,  
Nodding heads frail as a high cloud's feather,  
Expressing Joy in Beauty's Hymn.  
And, hark ! from many a hidden face  
Echoes I hear through silver space :  
The Morning Stars that sing together,  
And the delighting Seraphim !

LAWFORD,  
*Early Summer*, 1916.

## THE PASSION

THOSE whose Love, unborn to sight,  
Never did itself disclose  
Save in water's cry; a rose;  
Meteor furrowing the night;

Mote of any turning ray;  
Pipe of bird mid sunset's flush;  
Rain stilled, leaves flame-wet, and hush  
Of a rainbow's fire and spray;

Any straight road leads afar  
'Cross a hill-brow—What's beyond?  
Seven hung notes of music fond;  
Seven dark poplars, one white star;

Cloud lifting a tower aloft;  
Light and play and shadowy grace  
Of the soul behind a face  
Flitting by on motion soft;

Lonely figure on a height;  
Those whose love but shines a hint  
Fainter than the far sea's glint  
To the inland gazer's sight—

These alone, and but in part,  
Guess of what my songs are spun,  
And Who holds communion  
Subtly with my troubled heart.

But the substance of my grief  
Scarcely can their thought surmise,  
Who but glimpse through these my eyes  
Joy as fathomless as brief.

Others in this strange world flung,  
Orphans, too, of Destiny,  
Have the virtue, but not I,  
Keeps heart crystal, single tongue;

And know not, whose hearts are whole,  
How—when sickened and unclean,  
Unfit or to see, be seen—  
Close thorns pack and prick the soul.

Yet though here soul suffereth,  
Complicate by vision's light,  
Never would I cede this right  
Of a sharpened life and death.

For I keep in confidence  
In my breast a subtle faith  
'Scapes alway by narrow scathe  
And I draw my succour thence.

One Day, or maybe one Night—  
Living ? dying ?—I shall see  
The Rose open gloriously  
On its heart of living light.

Know what any bird may mean,  
Meteor in my heart shall rest,  
Spelled on my brain blaze th' unguessed  
Words of the rainbow's dazzling sheen.

O the hour for which I wait !  
Lovers of the Secret Love  
Watch with me, and we will prove  
Constancy can be elate.

For the sigil we have now  
Is but echo, shadow, less  
Than a nothing's nothingness,  
To what that hour will allow :

Lost and found ! The Shining Ones !  
Music, passion, scent, delight,  
Light and depth and space and height :  
Heaven and its seven suns !

DORSET SQUARE,  
*October, 1916.*

## LAST WORDS

O LET it be

Just such an eve as this when I must die !

To see the green bough soaking, still against a sky  
Washed clean after the rain.

To watch the rapturous rainbow flame and fly  
Into the gloom where drops fall goldenly,  
And in my heart to feel the end of pain.

The end of pain : the late, the long expected !—

To see the skies clear in a sudden minute,

The grey disparting on the blue within it,

And on the low far sea the clouds collected.

In that deep quiet die to all has been,

To be renewed, to bud, to flower again :

My second spring !—whose hope was nigh re-  
jected

Before I go hence and am no more seen.

To hear the blackbird ring out, gay and bold,

The low renewal of the ringdove's moan

From among high, sheltered boughs, and cease-  
less fall



Pitter, pitter, patter,  
A dribble of gold  
From leaves nodding each on the other one,  
The hush, calm piping and the slow, sweet mood !  
To drink the ripe warm scent of soaking matter,  
Wet grass, wet leaves, wet wood,  
Wet mould,  
The saddest and the grandest scent of all.

So when my dying eyes have loved the trees  
Till with huge tears turned blind,  
When the vague ears for the last time have  
    hearkened  
To the cool stir of the long evening breeze,  
The blackbird's tireless call,  
Having drunk deep of earth-scent strong and kind,  
Come then, O Death, and let my day be darkened.

I shall have had my all.

LAWFORD,  
    *April*, 1916.

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